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ABSTRACT

These two issues of the bulletin of English for Special Purposes in the Middle East and North Africa (ESPMENA) include book reviews, notices to the profession, and these articles: "Verb Frequencies in a Forestry Textbook" (Yu Xiaoyuan); "X Equals NX One Plus MX Two Over M Plus N" (E. Arnold); "A Note on Research in an EAP [English for Academic Purposes] Writing Clinic" (Larry Selinker); and "The Structure of Oral Presentations" (Hilary Nesi, John Skelton). (MSE)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Our front page shows a change in subcriptions and advertisements. We apologize to our subscribers for having to put up our subscriptions by one pound Stg. a year. The rise in costs of production and postage have compelled us to do this. We hope that subscribers will continue to encourage us by not minding the increase.

1. ARTICLE

VERB FREQUENCIES IN A FORESTRY TEXTBOOK

Yu Xiaoyuan
Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China

a) Introduction

There is an ongoing debate about the extent to which different academic disciplines call upon different linguistic and rhetorical resources (Swales, 1976; Williams, 1978; Sager et al., 1980; Swales and Bhatia, 1983). However, it is generally agreed that different academic disciplines at least differ in their selection and utilization of vocabulary; for instance, Williams (1978) argues for an academic common core and suggests that the linguistic difference between subjects is primarily a matter of specialist lexis. However, the issue of which parts of speech make the major contribution to subject-specific vocabulary has apparently been little discussed. For instance, Sager et al (1980) do not directly consider the question in their extensive discussion of the special English lexicon. There is reason to suppose that most investigators have assumed that specialist lexis will be principally associated with nouns, and rather less with verbs, adjectives or adverbs and little -- except perhaps for legal English (Swales and Bhatia, 1983) -- with pronouns, conjunctives and so on. Thus, in the forestry case, for example, in the world there are hundreds of thousands of species of trees, which are referred to by such nouns as pine, ash, oak, spruce, maple, elm, cypress, poplar, and so on. To take a second example, there is a range of specialist nouns to describe various kinds of aggregation of trees, such nouns as forest, wood, grove, copse, stand and clump.

We may, therefore, assume the existence in all fields of subject-specific nominal lexis. Rather more interesting and rather more uncertain is the issue of whether this restricted lexis extends to the important word-class category of verbs. The purpose of this paper is to examine this issue in the context of forestry. The choice of forestry was determined by my employment as a teacher of English in a forestry university in China. One of the motives underlying this small piece of research is to provide data that can be related to the general ESP/EST syllabus that has recently been constructed in China. A study of the verbs that occur in a forestry textbook should not only produce a frequency list but also allow judgements as to whether the verbs that emerge fall into one of the following classes.

a. Verbs common in general English (be, have, use, make, etc.)

b. Verbs common in general scientific English (obtain, develop, produce, establish, etc.)

c. Verbs only common in biological science (breed, attack, plant, affect, yield, etc.)

d. Verbs only common in plant and tree studies (transpire and defoliate)

x. Verbs not found in the syllabus list (infect).

Method

Forestry is a comprehensive subject, dealing with not only mathematics, chemistry and biology, but also geography, meteorology, economics and social habits. These matters are typically taught partly through the medium of textbooks, so the preliminary frequency analysis has been based on a forestry textbook. The book chosen was Applied Forest Tree Improvement (AFTI) by Bruce Zobel and John Talbert (1984), from which the first and ninth chapters, which together contain about 23,000 words, were selected for detailed analysis. Frequencies of the verbs in the two chapters were assembled and ranked in the manner of Swales (1976). That is all the finite and non-finite verbs were extracted except auxiliary and modal verbs, and non-finite verbs which are only used as attributives and predicatives. In these two chapters, there are 432 different lexical verbs in finite and non-finite uses. They were listed according to their occurrences, from the highest to

the lowest, with a cutoff point at four instances (Table 1).

Also shown in Table 1 is a comparison of the verb frequencies in the above-mentioned chapters with the combined verb frequencies in HS (Huddleston, and Swales). The explanation for the columns in Table 1 is as follows:

a) Number of place of the verb in AFTI.
b) Total number of occurrences of the verb in AFTI.
c) Number indicating the difference in ranks between AFTI and HS in terms of groups of tens. If a verb occurs only in the two chapters, (Y) is used.
d) Number of place of the verb in HS.
e) Total number of occurrences of the verb in HS.

In Table 1 the signs "+" and "-" indicate the different rankings in AFTI. In column (c), "+" indicates a higher ranking in AFTI than in HS, whereas "-" a lower ranking in AFTI than in HS. Now let me take grow as an example.

8. grow 44 (+4)

The actual figures are: in HS, grow is in the 54th place and occurs 42 times, and in AFTI, in the 8th place, 44 times. Therefore, grow comes 46 places higher in AFTI and so is entered as (+4). Note that any item with a place difference of less than 10 is entered as (0).

Column (f) indicates the provisional classification into "range types":

A=general English, B=general scientific English, C=biological science and D=restricted to plant and tree studies.

In the final column (g), X refers to the verb which cannot be found on the English syllabus list for science students of China.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Verb Frequency List from Applied Forest Tree Improvement (AFTI) with the Combined One from Huddleston, & Swales.

Verbs	AFTI		HS			
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
1. be	640	(0)	1	4296	A	
2. use	71	(0)	6	203	A	
3. make	66	(0)	7	191	A	
4. obtain	55	(0)	11	126	B	
5. develop	53	(+3)	38	59	B	
6. have	48	(0)	2	412	A	
7. breed	45	(Y)			C	
8. grow	44	(+4)	54	42	B	
9. do	43	(+5)	63	35	A	
10. find	42	(0)	3	302	A	
11. become	39	(0)	18	99	A	
12. produce	32	(0)	12	125	B	
13. cause	31	(+1)	27	71	A	
14. determine	23	(+1)	26	73	B	
15. consider	22	(0)	21	87	B	
16. need	22	(+6)	85	27	A	
17. show	22	(-1)	4	244	A	
18. establish	21	(+12)	146	16	B	
19. report	20	(+8)	105	22	A	
20. require	19	(+1)	34	63	B	
21. attack	18	(Y)			C	
22. reduce	18	(+1)	40	59	B	
23. take	18	(0)	15	117	A	
24. include	17	(+5)	77	30	A	
25. occur	17	(0)	17	105	A	
26. relate	17	(+5)	78	30	A	
27. result in	16	(Y)			B	
28. appear	15	(0)	20	88	A	
29. increase	15	(0)	32	67	B	
30. indicate	15	(0)	25	77	B	
31. know	15	(-1)	14	119	A	
32. list	15	(Y)			A	
33. control	14	(Y)			B	
34. recognize	14	(Y)			B	
35. improve	13	(Y)			B	
36. overcome	13	(Y)			A	
37. plant	13	(Y)			C	
38. work	13	(+4)	87	27	A	

Verbs	AFTI		HS			
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
39. apply	12	(0)	31	68	B	
40. give	12	(-3)	5	236	A	
41. result from	12	(Y)			B	
42. change	11	(-1)	23	77	B	
43. follow	10	(-1)	24	77	A	
44. help	10	(+4)	91	25	A	
45. keep	10	(+4)	92	25	A	
46. state	10	(Y)			B	
47. achieve	9	(+6)	115	20	B?	
48. affect	9	(+6)	116	20	C	
49. call	9	(-4)	8	142	A	
50. combine	9	(Y)			B	
51. emphasize	8	(Y)			A	
52. enable	8	(+8)	138	17	A	
53. maintain	8	(+4)	98	24	B	
54. mention	8	(+11)	167	14	A	
55. refer	8	(+3)	68	27	A	
56. seem	8	(Y)			A	
57. select	8	(Y)			B	
58. vary	8	(0)	50	46	B	
59. choose	7	(Y)			B	
60. come	7	(+6)	122	19	A	
61. deal with	7	(Y)			B	
62. desire	7	(Y)			A	
63. encounter	7	(Y)			B	
64. feel	7	(Y)			A	
65. involve	7	(0)	60	40	B	
66. understand	7	(+2)	95	25	A	
67. yield	7	(+6)	134	18	C	
68. accept	6	(Y)			A	
69. consist of	6	(-2)	41	57	B	
70. damage	6	(Y)			C	
71. depend on	6	(-4)	29	69	A	
72. differ	6	(+2)	96	24	A	
73. respond	6	(Y)			A?	
74. test	6	(Y)			A	
75. accomplish	5	(Y)			A	
76. arise	5	(-2)	52	43	B	
77. cite	5	(Y)			B	
78. contain	5	(-6)	9	139	B	
79. continue	5	(Y)			A	
80. cover	5	(Y)			A	
81. define	5	(-2)	58	40	B	
82. discuss	5	(-1)	70	33	A	

Verbs	AFTI		HS			
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
83. illustrate	5	(+2)	104	22	B	
84. manipulate	5	(Y)			B	
85. observe	5	(Y)			B	
86. prefer	5	(Y)			A	
87. prove	5	(Y)			B	
88. suggest	5	(-5)	37	60	B	
89. assess	4	(Y)			A	
90. complete	4	(Y)			A	
91. describe	4	(-5)	33	63	A	
92. destroy	4	(Y)			C	
93. harvest	4	(Y)			C	
94. hold	4	(+3)	129	18	A	
95. infect	4	(Y)			C	X
96. influence	4	(Y)			B	
97. initiate	4	(Y)			B	
98. look at	4	(Y)			A	
99. manage	4	(Y)			B	
100. offer	4	(Y)			A	
101. outline	4	(Y)			A	
102. place	4	(+1)	118	20	A	
103. predict	4	(+7)	176	13	B	
104. pursue	4	(Y)			B	
105. recover	4	(Y)			C	
106. result	4	(Y)			B	
107. say	4	(-6)	45	53	A	
108. start	4	(+5)	160	15	A	
109. subject to	4	(Y)			B	
110. supply	4	(+2)	133	18	A	
111. tolerate	4	(Y)			C	
112. write	4	(-8)	28	70	A	

Results

As usual, there is considerable similarity at the top end of the verb lists. Just as eight out of the first ten verbs in H and S are the same in Table 2, so seven of the first twelve verbs in HS and AFTI are similar in Table 3.

Table 2*

H	be have find show give use make produce form contain
S	be have find call give show use make know contain

Table 3

HS	be have give find show use make call contain form obtain produce
AFTI	be use make obtain develop have breed grow do find become produce

However, the verbs of the two lists increasingly diverge as the verb frequencies become lower.

Now it can be seen that the 112 verbs do fall into one of the four classes mentioned above. In Class A there are such verbs as be, have, find, use, make, give, show, become, cause and take, which usually occur frequently both in general English and in our daily life. So they can be named verbs of general English or everyday life.

Verbs of Class B are those widely used in scientific English. They can be found not only in physics, chemistry and mathematics, but also in biology, medicine and forestry. Verbs in AFTI of this class are obtain, develop, produce, establish, require, increase, improve, change, maintain, and so on. These verbs are typically called "sub-technical" verbs or "academic" verbs. Verbs of Class A and Class B account for about 88 percent of the 112 verbs in Table 1, of which 56 verbs are in Class A and 45 in Class B. These verbs, we can say, are "common-core" verbs. However, their frequency varies from subject to subject. Let us compare the verbs obtain and grow in AFTI with those in S (see Table 4). It can be seen that

* from Swales (1976)

obtain occurs in AFTI about 8.7 times as often as in S, and grow occurs 127.5 times more frequently than in S.

Table 4: Comparison of Verb Frequencies

	obtain	grow
AFTI	55/23,000 = 0.2391%	44/23,000 = 0.1913%
S*	(126 - 71)/200,000 = 0.0275%	(42 - 39)/200,000 = 0.0015%

* Obtain and grow occur 71 times and 39 times in H respectively, so the total occurrences in S should be 55 and 3 respectively.

In forestry, obtain and grow often appear in such phrases or sentences:

> "As results are obtained and advanced generations of improved trees are developed...", "The result obtained from any forest management operation will be determined by...", "the environment in which it is grown", "to grow the most valuable forest products".

We now need to consider the remaining 12% (11 verbs in Class C). Although all these verbs except for infect are found in the syllabus, it is nonetheless clear that different disciplines select certain verbs more frequently than other disciplines. For example, such verbs as breed, attack, plant, affect, yield, damage, and tolerate occur frequently in the book Applied Forest Tree Improvement, where we can read "to breed trees that can tolerate low levels of nutrients", "antibiosis, in which the insect is killed, injured or prevented from completing its normal life cycle...", "Historically, growing forest trees has yielded a low return on the investment...", "the trees planted later on a given site...", "If trees are chosen in a forest stand that has only been slightly attacked,...", etc. These verbs are also widely used in agriculture, zoology, biology, physiology and medicine, which deal with living things. Therefore, they are verbs of biological science (Class C). Of course, they have different frequencies in different subjects. For example, the verb breed can be seen to rank the seventh in Table 1, but it can be found

neither in S nor in H. This means it occurs less than 12 times in S or in H if at all.

There are very few examples of Class D verbs and none in Table 1. Defoliate and transpire are two of these verbs which may be only used in plants and trees. They each occur only once in the two chapters. There are presumably also verbs of this class in other subjects. Compared with the other verbs, they are few in number in textbooks. They may be called "technical" verbs.

Discussion

Although verb frequencies vary with different subjects and even with different materials in the same subject, it is still clear that Class A and B verbs account for the majority of all verbs in the forestry context. A neat illustration of this fact is that all the verbs (except one) in the forestry frequency list are also found in the general ESP/EST syllabus of China.

Results such as those presented here do, however, need to be treated with some caution. The sample is selective and small; certain Class A and B verbs may in fact have special meanings in forestry; and nothing has been said about nouns or adjectives. Pedagogical implications need also to be cautious. The instructor of English for forestry can take some comfort from the fact that he or she is unlikely to encounter many technical verbs (as may well not be the case with nouns). On the other hand, that instructor may want to give more attention to some of the verbs that would appear to occur more often in forestry and its allied disciplines than in general science. Such selective attention may be specially valuable if the students start their specialized forestry courses in English after they have completed their English language requirements.

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Note:

I would like to thank Professor John M. Swales for his comments and suggestions.

b) "X Equals NX One Plus MX Two Over M Plus N"

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Describing the prosodic features of speech has plagued linguists for a long time. What is known is that intonation, pause length, stress placement, vowel and consonant length, volume, etc., all have a part to play in information packaging, disambiguation and turn-taking in conversation. What is not known, inter alia, is to what extent any of these phenomena are universal in human communication and to what extent code-specific. The 'exercises' described here attempt amongst other things to make students aware that such phenomena exist and are important, using the 'code' of mathematics and specifically some of the features of spoken mathematical discourse. They also represent a different way of approaching several old problems, viz. sound discrimination and teaching the English used in mathematical expressions.

Look at Appendix A (from Blackie SB 1978:8). All of the expressions except 3) and 4), while completely unambiguous in the written form, are potentially ambiguous when spoken.

Try writing down.

(i) "a squared plus b squared".

You could come up with either:

(ii) $(a^2 + b)^2$ or

(iii) $a^2 + b^2$

Without clues of intonation, pausing, stress, etc., it is impossible to assign the correct value. At this stage it might be objected that one form of the above is unmarked and one marked and that all other things being equal (iii) will be written. This argument falls down when expressions like (iv) are involved.

(iv) "x equals nx one plus mx two over m plus n"

(iv) has multiple possible written forms. Which is marked? I prefer to argue that all expressions are marked by the accompanying prosodic features for one interpretation only.

Native speakers, particularly mathematicians who are native speakers of English will automatically read the written expressions in a way that disambiguates them/makes it possible to assign the correct value. This point, that prosody is used to disambiguate mathematical expressions is almost totally unremarked in most of the courses I have seen/textbooks that purport to deal with the reading of written mathematical formulae. When (v) is recorded on a tape by a native speaker,

$$(v) = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2}{m + n}$$

if the tape is stopped after 'mx two' it is possible for most native speakers to answer the question "Is there more to come or is this the end of the expression?" correctly. After the expression has been heard but not written down, most native speakers can group 'nx one plus mx two' together and 'm plus n' together. Thus it is eminently possible for the above expression to be heard and written down correctly without the use of the word 'all'. Indeed I have some evidence that this is what mathematicians do. Table I shows this evidence. The data was obtained by asking six native English speakers who use such expressions in their work to read out 50 mathematical expressions including those above (in random order). They were recorded along with comments on a tape recorder. All of those questioned had at least 'A' level maths and they consisted of three science teachers (one biology, one physical science and one chemistry), one computer teacher, one mechanical engineering and one electrical engineering teacher. All were employed as lecturers here at OTIC at the time. They have all been allocated letters of the alphabet. The experiment was prefaced by the same introduction: "Please read the following expressions out as if you were reminding another teacher/mathematician/engineer/physicist, etc. of a formulae they already know." Some recordings of usage in the classrooms were also made but the number of formulae actually used was so low that the effort spent was not rewarded. (However, the data obtained has been useful for other purposes).

Despite the small sample, all informants said 1) 2) 3) and 7) without using the word 'bracket(s)'. Indeed only three informants used the word 'brackets' in any of the 50 expressions. Neither 'all' or 'bracket(s)' was used in 4) or 6 except by informant F. Most of the informants, on the other hand, needed to use 'all' in 1) 2) 3) and 8).

TABLE I

Formula/Expression read	Number of informants using the words 'all'	'brackets'	
1) $x = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2}{m + n}$	4	0	
2) $x = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2 + n}{m}$	4	0	
3) $\sqrt{(x - a)}^2$	5	0	
4) $\sqrt{(x - a^2)}$	0	1	[F]
5) $b^2 = 4a(1 - e)^2$	2	3	[E, D & F]
6) $b^2 = 4a(1 - e^2)$	0	2	[D & F]
7) $\frac{3a^3}{2b^2}$	1	0	
8) $\left(\frac{3a^3}{2b}\right)^2$	5	1	[F]

9) $d = \sqrt{[(x - x_1)^2 + (y - y_1)^2 + (z - z_1)^2]^3}$ 6 2 [D & F]

Comparison of the way that 9) was actually read with the mouthful in Appendix C, Exercise E, No 8 is informative. Three informants [A B and C] used 'all' only once (after the second square bracket); two informants [E and F] used it after each of the groups "x minus x one", "y minus y one", "z minus z one" and D used 'all' both after the second square bracket and after each of the groups, as well as 'brackets' three times. Even what D said is 17 words less than what the students are expected to say in Exercise E No 8.

It is clear therefore that for some purposes the formulae above are spoken without the use of 'all' or 'brackets'. When disambiguation is required 'all' is used far more frequently than 'brackets'. There is also not one use of the word 'subscript' on the recordings (pace Donovan 1978:20-21 - appendix C). Nobody had even heard of the use of the word 'quantity' in the way Blackie (TB 1978:8) describes it being used. Anyone listening to the tapes (described later - see the notes to Table I) can hear just how important intonation and pause length are in disambiguation for most purposes, for example in disambiguating the four possible versions of (iv) - see Appendix B numbers 12 to 15. This fits in with the statement in Hall and Bowyer (1980:89) that "a mathematician is unlikely to make any distinction in speech (except sometimes a difference in intonation or length of pauses) between pairs such as the following:

$x + (y + z)$ and $(x + y) + z$

$\sqrt{ax + b}$ and $\sqrt{(ax + b)}$

$a^n - 1$ and a^{n-1} (emphasis added)

I must say that this accords with my own intuitions. I personally like to regard the spoken form of such expressions as described above as equivalent to the short forms used in English /kn/ for 'can', /ə/ for 'a', /ʃɪz/ for 'she is' etc. in that they are more natural, quicker, and make a speaker 'sound' 'more' English (i.e., they are used by natives to signal club membership!).

I have used the conclusions above to design some teaching materials (with the help of my colleagues at the Higher Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Hoon, S.P.L.A.J. - Dan and Jenny Bowles and Gordon Moss). (See Appendix B).

(a) The students are usually prepared beforehand in that they are taught the alphabet, the names and meanings of the signs used, etc. as well as the meaning of 'over' 'all' etc. These things have usually been practised very little at this stage.

(b) The students listen to 5 or 6 simple expressions (like those in Appendix A) and try to write them down. They are usually given a couple of hearings and not rushed. There is usually one pair like those in (vi) and (vii).

(vi) $x^2 + y^2 = 0$

(vii) $(x^2 + y)^2 = 0$

They are both spoken without the use of the words 'all'; or 'brackets'. It is often necessary to slightly exaggerate the pauses, intonation, etc. at this stage. This will of course depend on your students. One of the students writes down the answers on the board. These are then discussed. Usually there are some students who have 'heard' the difference between the two.

(c) The two contrasting expressions are played again on the tape. This time all the students are asked to listen for the difference and describe it. This usually involves a lot of attempt at real communication!! They are usually interested and well motivated. (NB: Some may become frustrated by their inability to 'hear' the difference - this needs careful handling!). The decision as to whether to use the metalanguage, i.e. terms like 'intonation', 'pause', etc. I leave up to the teacher him/herself.

(d) I usually then play more recordings similar to (vi) and (vii). The students again write the expressions down. This time there is usually much more success. I also dictate to the students to prepare them to dictate to each other. At some stage in (d) I stop the tape and ask: "Is there more coming or is this the end of the expression?" "How do you know?" "How do you know these ones go together?" etc.

(e) Depending on how well it is going, I get a student to dictate a few expressions to the whole class, and eventually I get them to dictate to each other in pairs. (This again must be controlled to avoid collusion or deliberate misleading.) It is possible also to introduce more and more complex expressions during stages (d) and (e). Usually during this phase I slip in an expression which is too complex to be dictated and written down in the way the students are doing (like 9) in Table I). One student - there is always one - will start to laugh and ask what to do. It is at this point that I introduce the terms 'all', 'brackets', 'open brackets', 'close brackets' etc. It is sometimes necessary to explain these earlier because students demand to know. I like to put them off until they use such terms only when they have to, in other words as the mathematicians themselves do.

(f) Sometimes it is necessary to sidetrack into the 'b/p', 'a/e/i', 'g/j' problem with my students. I do this with expressions like

(viii) $2b + 2p + 8p^2 = 108$

which the students must dictate to each other and then work out the value of 'b' if 'p' is, for example, 3. (See answer after Appendix C).

Conclusions

I will leave discussion of the relationship between English and Maths that the above implies until another occasion. How much the above helps my students in actual conversations is of course debatable. The similarities between the feeling of 'more to come' that one gets if a mathematical expression is read with the "wrong" intonation (i.e. non-final) and the feeling one gets when one misreads another's utterance in a conversation and waits for them to finish after they already have, is remarkable. The similarities in timing, pause length, etc. between spoken maths and conversational English are largely unexplored. I have tried playing natural conversations to students and getting them to answer "Is there more?" questions and the like, but this has not been as successful as the above. The traditional handling of the reading of mathematical expressions in textbooks is very sterile and gives no clues as to how they should be read. This in my experience, encourages teachers to expect their students to read the expressions, brackets and all! (see for example Donovan (1978:20) - contained as Appendix C. Nucleus Mathematics (Hall

and Bowyer 1980) is the exception.)

Ewer and Boys (1982) studied the textbooks used in ESP. Amongst other things they asked: "To what extent do the teaching points selected by the textbooks correspond to the standard communicative features of EST?" (1981:90). They comment: "In the present analysis only the verbal indicators - about 700 of them - were used as references, since none of the textbooks dealt with the nonverbal ones" (1981:91). The 'exercises' here represent a very small response.

The tasks that I am asking the students to perform are open to many objections. Will the students ever have to read expressions like these? Will they have to write down such expressions? How does this square with what goes on in the maths lessons and the other lessons where formulae are used?

BUT the 'exercises' practise the discrimination of sounds and their written realisations in a way which is less boring than matching pairs, and which motivated the students generally to listen. It practises expressions like 'root', 'square/squared', 'plus', 'minus', 'times', 'over', 'equals', etc. in a way which is interesting, motivating, lively and which adds variety to the English lessons.

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APPENDIX A (after Blackie (SB 1978:8)

Read out the following:

1) $a^2 + b^2$

2) $x^2 + y^3$

3) p^4

4) x^y

5) $4b^2 \times 2b^2 =$

6) $3y^2 \times y =$

7) $x^5 \div x^2 =$

8) $z^n = (x + y)^2$

9) $6a^2 - 3a^2 =$

10) $6y^2 \div 3y^2 =$

APPENDIX B

Read out the following to your partner, who should try to write them down correctly. Only read each expression TWICE.

1) $x - a^2$

2) $\sqrt{(x - a)^2}$

3) $\sqrt{(x - a^2)}$

4) $\dfrac{3a^3}{2b}$

5) $\left(\dfrac{3a^3}{2b}\right)^2$

6) $R_x = \dfrac{a_1 - c_3}{a_2}$

7) $3p^2 - 2c = 0$

$\dfrac{}{2b}$

8) $y = ae^{kx}$

9) $y = (ae)^{kx}$

10) $b^2 = 4a(1 - e^2)$

11) $b^2 = 4a(1 - e)^2$

12) $x = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2}{m+n}$

13) $x = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2}{m + n}$

14) $x = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2 + n}{m}$

15) $x = \frac{nx_1 + mx_2 + n}{m}$

APPENDIX C (after Donovan 1978:20-21)

From Exercise C

1) x equals a plus b all over c

2) x plus y equals capital A over a minus b

3) 1 equals a plus open brackets n minus one, close brackets, d

From Exercise E

3) x squared minus a squared equals x plus a in brackets times x minus a in brackets

5) x equals nx subscript one plus mx subscript two, all over m plus n

8) d equals the square root of, open square brackets, open brackets, x subscript one minus x subscript two, close brackets, squared, plus open brackets, y subscript one minus y subscript two, close brackets, squared, plus, open brackets z subscript one minus z subscript two, close brackets, squared, close square brackets.

Note: Answer to equation 8: b = 15

2. REVIEWS

a) A Review and Critique of

English for Science and Technology - A Discourse Approach

Trimble, Louis
Cambridge Language Teaching Library,
Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp 180

Writings in the field of ESP have tended to fall into two broad categories, with little or no overlap between them. The first, and by far the largest category contains articles related to the design and implementation of courses. This includes, for example, needs analysis, the principles underlying the structuring of courses, and detailed suggestions on the exercise-formats and methods of evaluation. The second comprises studies devoted to particular aspects of ESP discourse, the aim of which is to establish which features are most characteristic of particular genres or of ESP discourse generally. The present work, by an author long-established in the field (his work on written EST discourse started in 1967, as he tells us in the Introduction), is unusual in that it explicitly connects research into scientific discourse with a program and a methodology for teaching. Indeed the two concerns were interdependent right from the beginning. Here, then, is the fruit of nearly twenty years' continuous involvement in both teaching and research by a recognized authority who, together with colleagues such as Karl Drobnic, Larry Selinker, John Lackstrom and Mary Todd-Trimble, did much to put ESP on the map during the 1970's, and who may be fairly considered a founding father of the discipline. The book is thus required reading, and in a sense needs no recommendation from a reviewer.

If this review appears unduly critical, this is because a book by Trimble raises high expectations, and these the present book fails to fulfil. The sub-title of the book, 'a discourse approach', suggests that we are offered a coherent and systematic approach to the practical analysis of scientific texts in ways that are directly useful in the classroom. While the treatment is systematic enough, I believe that in certain crucial respects it is not sufficiently explicit and that coherence suffers as a result. I also hope to show that the approach advocated is inadequate as a methodology for teaching, because it neglects the needs of the learner.

The organization of the book is in part determined by the author's approach to the analysis of discourse, which is based on what is known as the 'Rhetorical Process Chart'. In this, discourse is divided into 'levels' in which the writer is seen as exercising choices about rhetorical content. At the highest level, Level A, are 'the objectives of the total discourse', such as detailing an experiment or presenting new hypotheses. At Level B, are 'the general rhetorical functions that develop the objectives of Level A', such as presenting information on experimental procedures or reporting past research. Level C consists of the 'specific rhetorical functions that develop the general rhetorical functions of Level B': examples are description (physical, function and process), definition and classification. Finally at Level D are 'the rhetorical techniques that provide relationships within and between the rhetorical units of Level C': these include ordering based on space order or temporal order, and also patterns based on order of importance, comparison, and causality and result, among others. It is a basic tenet of the approach that, to quote: 'the functions chosen at one level almost invariably determine those to be chosen at the next level down'. (ibid, p 12).

In addition to chapters dealing with Levels C and D (Levels A and B are ignored, to the book's detriment - see below), the author devotes sections to developing his concept of the 'EST paragraph' (also known as the 'conceptual paragraph'), and to the question of materials ('genuine', 'adapted', or 'synthesized and created'. Separate chapters are devoted to 'rhetorical - grammatical relationships' (such as passive - stative distinctions and the non-temporal use of tense) and to lexical problems (sub-technical vocabulary and noun-compounds). The final chapter is an exposition of how the theoretical insights detailed in the body of the book can be directly applied in teaching students both to read and to write EST discourse.

As a general observation, I think it can be said that the author has organized his material well, and about each of the topics referred to he has something interesting to say. The chapter on 'rhetorical-grammatical relationships' is particularly useful as a basic reference. The examples given to illustrate the rhetorical functions and techniques have been well chosen and the author's comments are clear. Some of these examples will no doubt prove valuable to the teacher who is anxious to avoid 'constructed' examples of his own devising and finds it hard to locate a suitable 'authentic' passage.

Throughcut, one is impressed by the lucidity with which his case is presented.

Impressed, yet not inspired. For there is nothing that is new here, nothing that has not already appeared in published form. There is no sense of striving after new ideas, of exploring fresh frontiers. One particularly interesting line of research, pioneered by one of Trimble's colleagues, John Lackstrom, sought to explore the relationships between rhetorical patterning and the structure of logical argumentation (see Lackstrom, 1981). This is not mentioned here. Presumably it was thought to be rather speculative or not sufficiently researched.

There is a danger, I think, that the framework set out in the book will come to be too easily accepted. It appears to form a neat package because of the manner in which it is presented; it is easy to be persuaded that what we are being offered is not only a well-researched body of findings, but also an overall approach to discourse which is complete and consistent in itself. At least in its current stage of development, this is not the case. There are certain theoretical gaps and inconsistencies. Take, for instance, the definition of a conceptual paragraph (p 45).

> "The 'conceptual' paragraph is developed around the semantic element that we call the 'core generalization' or, simply, the 'core'. This is the generalization that is supported [my emphasis] by the lesser generalizations and/or the specific statements that make up the information in the paragraph. As a rule, this 'core generalization' is the most general statement in the paragraph".

The problem here is that the notion of 'support' is left undefined, so that one is left with no clear principle to follow in deriving core generalizations from lesser generalizations and/or specific statements. From the examples given, it would appear that support has to do with greater specificity, and that a lesser generalization (or 'sub-core') is a direct development of a part of the core-generalization. Sometimes a sub-core is 'abstracted' from the core, i.e. a physical part of the core statement is detached and treated separately. But often neither core nor sub-core(s) can be identified with a single chunk of text. Piecing together the core and sub-core(s) is a tricky business, depending on

complicated processes of inferences, the types of which are not specified. Little wonder that, as the author admits many of his students have great difficulty distinguishing generalizations and specific statements when collecting data for written assignments.

Another key notion which lacks clear definition is that of 'presupposition'. To quote from two separate sources:

1. "(presuppositions are) ... certain assumptions ... (made by writers of scientific and technical discourse) ... concerning the kind and amounts of grammatical-rhetorical information that they assume readers share with them : that is, that readers bring to their EST reading". (ibid, p 114).

2. "(presuppositional elements comprise) ... information that the writer assumes the reader will bring to the discourse and the information that the reader actually does bring to it". (Todd-Trimble 1982, p 200).

These two quotations reveal a confusion between information that is assumed by the writer to be potentially available to the reader and information that is available as part of the pool of knowledge that he actually draws upon. The two types of information do not coincide except in the case of an 'ideal reader' drawn from a certain range of types : secondary school student, university undergraduate, graduate student and specialist researcher would represent four points along such a continuum. Each brings different amounts of information concerning the content of texts - conceptual content for the most part, but also lexis, as well as information about the structuring of texts and what Trimble refers to as 'grammatical-rhetorical relationships'. A good scientific writer matches his style and content to a projected 'ideal reader' from within the target group. In the ideal situation, then, but only in this situation, there is no conflict between the two notions of presupposition. The 'ideal reader' picks up the semantic content via his understanding of grammar and lexis, and the author's intention and point of view by means of his knowledge of the structuring of text and pragmatic markers in text. There is no problem, no mismatch. But in the typical situation, at least with foreign learners, there is a mismatch, either because the information the writer assumes the reader to have is not in fact possessed by the

reader, or else because the information, although available to the reader, is not put to use because it is not part of his 'active' repertoire i.e. it is knowledge not incorporated in active skills. Thus in the typical case, the two notions of presupposition diverge, not just quantitatively but qualitatively as well - the former referring to knowledge or information, and the latter to a skill or ability to apply knowledge. To use the same term to cover both is inadmissible. That Trimble in his book actually does confuse the two is clearly shown by another quotation from the current work, which follows the first quote above:

> "part of the presuppositional information that a native student brings to reading EST discourse is the ability [my emphasis] to comprehend these grammatical elements without special training". (ibid, p 114).

Trimble is guilty of conflating a concept which belongs with competence with a concept which belongs with performance. Not only does he confuse the two, he seems to assume that performance will look after itself if 'presuppositional' elements are taught. This indeed is the whole basis of his pedagogical approach. Exposure to carefully chosen examples of the rhetorical functions or techniques being taught, the identification by the student of chunks of texts exemplifying these, and the process of searching for his own examples, will, it is assumed, lead to the desired presuppositional knowledge being acquired ready for application in future reading tasks. There is a real danger here, I think, of assuming that what is taught will be internalized and used in outside reading in the subject area when the teacher-guide is no longer present.

Some other deficiencies in the approach to technical rhetoric developed by Trimble and his colleagues have been pointed out by Robert Bley-Vroman, who was a collaborator of Trimble's during the 1970's (Bley-Vroman, 1978). Trimble's division of a piece of discourse into four 'levels' forming a hierarchy - (A) 'objectives of the total discourse', (B) 'general' rhetorical functions', (C) 'specific rhetorical functions', and (D) 'rhetorical techniques' - is too rigid. A more realistic division proposed by Bley-Vroman is that between 'purposes' and 'devices'. The first three of Trimble's levels correspond to 'purposes', but there is no need for any given purpose to be tied to a particular level. For example, making a recommendation, which in Trimble's Rhetorical Process Chart

is at Level A, is just as likely to be the purpose of a single paragraph in a larger report as it is to be the purpose of an entire article.

A general criticism of the book would be that Trimble is too concerned with smaller units of discourse corresponding to the conceptual (or EST) paragraph, thus largely ignoring the wider communicative aims of the total discourse. He defends his neglect of purposes at Levels A and B, on the grounds that they are usually expressed explicitly, by the introductory section and by headings and sub-headings respectively. He also claims: 'research has shown us that we can best see the characteristics of written EST discourse at these levels (C and D)' (p 13). The 'we' here must, I think, be taken to mean Trimble and his colleagues. As Bley-Vroman points out, there are many devices (or organizational principles) associated with purposes operating over whole discourses or stretches of discourse. Some of these are the same as Trimble's Level D 'rhetorical techniques', such as 'analogy' and 'order of importance'.

Even if the limitation of focus to the level of the EST paragraph is accepted, one is bound to complain that Trimble has nothing whatsoever to say about logical connectors - words like 'thus', 'hence' and 'nevertheless', which form the cement binding together pieces of an author's argument. True, these have been discussed by many authors, but some mention here of how these serve to denote patterns of argument would have been helpful. In the first place, a more detailed analysis of surface markers, not only in relation to 'rhetorical techniques' like cause and effect, but also to 'rhetorical functions' such as description and classification, would have helped to give more substance and precision to the vague concept of 'support'. Secondly, the teacher and the student need to have a thorough knowledge of the most commonly acceptable forms of words used to express relationships in prose; the teacher who turns to this book in the expectation of finding information about the forms of expression typically used to realize rhetorical functions and techniques will look in vain.

Part of the problem, no doubt, is that in discourse one is dealing with patterns <u>beneath</u> the surface, with patterns of meaning, and that there is only a rough correspondence between surface forms and underlying rhetorical or logical structure. But even in cases which one would have thought relatively

clear-cut in this regard, there is a lack of guidance. In particular, it is disappointing that Trimble only mentions in one or two places the notion of 'transition statements' - those statements, often contained in a single sentence at the beginning of a (physical) paragraph, which mark shifts in topic or emphasis. No effort is made to describe characteristics of these statements, either in terms of their content (which is non-specific, and refers explicitly to patterns in discourse) or to the language typically used to express them.

A more fundamental critcism of the whole focus of the approach can also be made. It is centred on how the writer organizes information to convert his intended meaning (consisting of purposes, functions and concepts) into pieces of text. This is what Widdowson (1981) calls a 'textualization' approach. I suggest that within the terms of such an approach, equal attention has to be paid to both patterns of argument and presentation in general, and to the surface features of discourse used to realize these patterns. Trimble's book has nothing to say on patterns of argument (such as for instance, analogy as a structuring device), and it is uninformative too, about surface forms. These are serious omissions. Yet, more fundamentally still, a 'textualization' approach is inadequate if it does not take account of the reader, and what the reader has to do with a text, rather than focussing exclusively on what the writer does. What are the strategies that a reader can use to best meet his own private purposes in reading? Trimble has no answer to this. Recognizing how a writer organizes his content is only a useful skill if it can be incorporated into the reader's own set of purposes and strategies. How such knowledge can be put to use is a matter which is left to the reader. This is part of the competence-performance problem to which I referred earlier.

Essentially, what is wrong with the whole approach is that the reader, and his purposes and needs are put to one side. What does he need language for? Will the information about rhetoric be directly useful in his studies? Even if potentially useful, will the learner be able to put his knowledge to use (the competence-performance gap)? Finally, does the application of this kind of knowledge activate or inhibit the learner's own inbuilt strategies for learning?

The last question is particularly relevant if Widdowson's argument for the superiority of 'process-oriented' to 'goal-oriented' approaches to syllabus design is accepted (see

Widdowson, 1981). An approach such as Trimble's, even if it is based on 'textualization' rather than on 'text' (to use Widdowson's distinctions), is defective in that it assumes that what is taught is what needs to be learned. In this case, the 'goal of teaching' is to impart a body of knowledge about the rhetorical patterning of discourse. The learner, once equipped with this new knowledge, is then supposed to alter his behaviour when faced with any text so as to make use of a putative ability, the ability to discover rhetorical patterns. But what he really <u>needs</u>, the 'goal' of 'learning', is the ability to modify his natural or instinctive reading behaviour in order to extract what is most essential or relevant to his own needs at a particular time. An approach which is product-based (and that of Trimble is an almost pure example) has no way of taking account of these contingent needs or of the ways in which the reading process can be brought into line with the reader's purposes.

It is important to spell out why this is so. Firstly, as Widdowson points out, no goal-oriented approach can devote much attention to assessing and building on the learner's individual strategies for learning (which will include certain reading strategies or styles). In this light, Trimble's claim that his approach involves 'individualizing' appears trivial. But more seriously, as I have pointed out earlier, no account is taken of the <u>reader's</u> purposes, the whole focus of the book being on the writer's purposes and his means of realizing them. And as I have pointed out, even the <u>writer's</u> purposes and their associated devices are only illustrated with reference to low-level purposes. Higher-level purposes, such as presenting a theory, detailing an experiment, or even stating a problem, are not related to specific devices.

Without paying due attention to higher-level purposes in reading or writing, a theory of rhetoric cannot hope to make contact with what is most essential for the average reader of EST discourse, namely the ability to assess what is relevant in order to focus his/her powers of comprehension. In psycholinguistic work, it is becoming increasingly clear that fluent reading depends on a subtle interplay of top-down and bottom-up processes, with the former guiding the latter (see Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983 for a detailed account). What is needed now is a book which distils the essence of what is known about EST readers' purpose and the strategies used to achieve them.

What is needed in the long run - but which hardly seems possible in the foreseeable future - is a book combining the two viewpoints, that of the writer and the reader, in such a way that importance (to the writer) and relevance (to the reader) are brought together. Such a book will focus, not on rhetoric or 'designs in prose' as Trimble's book does, but on the process of expressing and perceiving the ideas themselves.

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b) Interface : English for Technical Communication

Hutchinson, T. and A. Waters
Student's Book, Teacher's Guide and Cassette
Longman, 1984

One does not normally expect a textbook on technical communication to make particularly interesting reading, but on browsing through Interface for the first time, I came across a number of items that caught my attention and made me want to read further. One of these had the heading "Robots - The Ideal Workers?" and it was accompanied by an underwater photograph of a torpedo-shaped craft bristling with equipment that looked as though it had been borrowed from a sound recording studio. I immediately wanted to know what Angus, as it's apparently called, could actually do. Perhaps even more surprising than finding several items of such general interest was finding that the exercises themselves were also full of interest and variety.

Interface is said to be designed for students with a background in English, science and technology at secondary level and that its aim is to provide the necessary language for students to be able to communicate about science and technology in a wide range of subject areas. Its content is described as being technical without being too specialized and giving particular emphasis to the use of visually-related material.

The Teacher's Guide is thorough but less than helpful to those teachers, of whom there are many overseas, who lack proper training and adequate experience. It is essentially an answer booklet and, although four model lessons are offered for the first section of the course, no attempt is made to give advice on methodology or effective presentation of the exercises, it being conveniently assumed that the teacher will know best what to do in his particular situation, as, of course, he should. The Guide is, therefore, quite adequate for teachers in Britain, where there is a generous supply of suitable teachers, but less than adequate in places like Sudan, where proper training, particularly in ESP, remains a problem. However, all teachers, whatever their technical knowledge, will no doubt be grateful for the brief but helpful background information provided in each section.

To my mind, this course has two particularly attractive features to recommend it. The first is the careful selection of the topics and the second is the skilful integration of the different components within each section. There are ten units, which include a wide variety of topics, all of which should be

of some interest to technical students. The units range from Tools to Materials and cover such subjects as Communications, Energy and Construction. Each unit is divided into three sections dealing with different aspects of the topic. For example, the unit about Construction deals with such engineering feats as the longest tunnels and the deepest drillings, how to build a car port, and a land reclamation project in Holland.

The second attractive feature of the course is the way in which the components within each section have been integrated. This has clearly been given considerable thought. A chart is given below to illustrate the essential design of each section and, by giving examples from the section on Robots which was mentioned previously, it is intended to illustrate the purpose of each of the components.

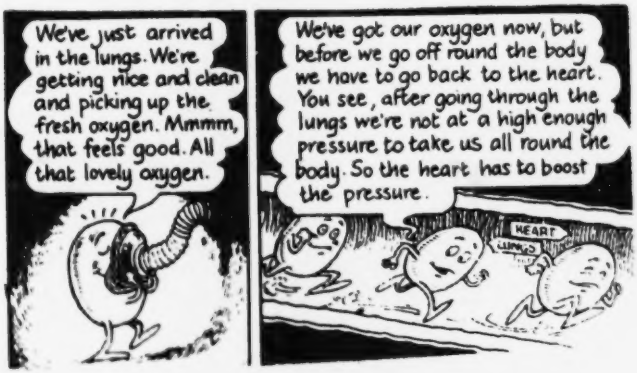
UNIT 4 COMPUTERS

Section A : Robots

Components		Explanation
STARTER	:	Will robots replace people at work?
↓		
INPUT	:	Short illustrated reading passage about the advantages of robots.
↓		
GATHERING INFORMATION	:	Exercises based on input plus reading passage about advantages human beings have over robots.
↓		
LANGUAGE FOCUS	:	Giving reasons (don't need/because) too/enough. Comparing abilities (can/can't) Listening passage about work of various types of robots.
↓		
TASK	:	Work out advantages and disadvantages of using either a car or a camel on an expedition across the Sahara desert (map provided).

Perhaps only those who have tried writing such materials themselves can really appreciate the achievement of tying in these various elements so neatly and ending up with a stimulating task that is closely related to the original topic and requires the use of the same structures and language.

The visual presentation of the text deserves especial mention. Technical information is, of course, often contained in diagrams and tables, so it is obviously important that students have practice in interpreting materials in this form. There are a wide variety of such materials and they are well presented. Equally important is the need for students to be able to present their own work in a visual form and they are asked to perform such exercises as reproducing the diagram of a blast furnace and then to illustrate it by adding labels to the different parts. I particularly liked the use of cartoons to illustrate processes and experiments. The cartoon shown below is taken from the section on pumping systems in which a blood cell gives a conducted tour of the body's blood system.


We've just arrived in the lungs. We're getting nice and clean and picking up the fresh oxygen. Mmmm, that feels good. All that lovely oxygen.
We've got our oxygen now, but before we go off round the body we have to go back to the heart. You see, after going through the lungs we're not at a high enough pressure to take us all round the body. So the heart has to boost the pressure.
HEART
LUNGS

The exercises demand a wide range of skills and ability from students. It is inevitable that there will be students who will find some of the work too easy and, therefore, boring whilst others will find parts too difficult, which can lead to discouragement and frustration. This is where the skills of the teacher come into play (or where the Guide could indicate possible problems and suggest alternatives). A general

coursebook cannot hope to cover all the important areas adequately, but Interface has made definite decisions about what areas are to be tackled and these are covered systematically. For example, exercises in the Language Focus component include systematic work on the use of prepositions, the use of the passive, and how to write reports. Some other courses fail by attempting too much and achieving too little.

There has long been a need for a good general language course for technical students at post-secondary level. Interface should be welcomed, not only because it certainly satisfies such a need, but also because it is a particularly interesting and stimulating course which should encourage the publication of other such courses. A high standard has been set. Let us hope that this course will provide a stimulus for improvement in the quality of teaching materials and, therefore, by extension, to an improvement in the quality of teaching itself in the field of ESP.

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3. SHORT NOTICES

a) Journals and Newsletters

i) English Language Research Journal

Birmingham University

This is an annual publication, edited by Chris Kennedy of the University of Birmingham. The journal will mainly be of interest to those concerned with the more theoretical aspects of English and current research issues, although the English teacher is by no means forgotten. In the issue received (No 5, 1986), there are two articles aimed primarily at the theoretician, both on aspects of discourse analysis ("On Challenging Moves" and "Textual Strategies and their Cognitive Effect"), while articles on "TEFL and teacher training - principles of integration" and "Listening Comprehension in ESP: Integrating Specialist Lectures into a pre-sessional course" cater more directly for the practitioner.

Future issues will be thematic in nature, with projected themes including: genre analysis in ESP; naturalness in language; language and ideology; vocabulary teaching and discourse analysis; and language policy and planning. Anyone wishing to reserve a copy of the 1987 issue, or to receive more information, should write to:

The Secretary
English Language Research Journal
University of Birmingham
P.O. Box 363
Birmingham
B15 2TT
England

ii) Al-Manakh, Language Centre Journal, University of Kuwait

It is reassuring to see the publication of Al-Manakh (Vol 6. No. 1. Sept 1985) after such a long period of dormancy. After three years there was a doubt as to whether it was still dormant or actually dead. It is, of course, a sensible system to have occasional publications when there is something worthwhile to say, always providing readers and contributors remain aware of their existence.

The present issue contains a very mixed bag of contributions which range from a report on Kuwait's first National Symposium on language teaching to a detailed account of intensive language courses run by the Yemen-America (sic) Language Institute and which include articles on some preliminary research on the present imperfect particle in Arabic and on how to use Bingo to teach pronunciation to Arabic speakers by using minimal pairs. Such range and diversity certainly reflect the journal's avowed intention of providing "a forum for language teaching within the Middle East and beyond", but this seems a rather ambitious aim, if publication is to continue in as sporadic a fashion as it has done in the past.

I found the only article that relates directly to the work of the Language Centre of Kuwait University, who publish this journal, of most interest. Suzanne Mizon and Rowena Jansson have presented a thorough account of the English Language Programme for Graduate students from its beginning in the Fall Semester in 1979. They have explained their own modifications to the course since 1984, which mainly consist of developing the Writing Component and the careful integration of the students' Term Papers with their course work, and they have indicated possible developments of the course in the future. The approach they have used to setting up and developing this course as well as the methods of integration they have adopted will be very useful to other ESP practitioners who face the task of establishing similar courses. I felt that some comment on the appropriateness of the TOEFL test as an entry requirement would have been instructive, since it is stated that "The TOEFL score has no relevance to our courses other than as a cut-off point for a student being required to do the course."

The emphasis of the article by Curt Rulon, entitled "Aspects of the 1984-85 YALI Intensive Program", which is about language courses at the Yemen-America Institute, is rather different. Curt Rulon is more concerned with the administrative aspects of running courses and he devotes his article to the details of dates of courses, times of classes and students' TOEFL scores in both the Yemen and the rest of the Middle East. The only indication of the course content is a list of course books given in an appendix. The purpose of this article is not clear to me.

The final contribution to this issue of Al-Manakh is a book

review written by David Cunliffe and Edward Richards of Meanings into Words (Adrian Doff, Christopher Jones and Keith Mitchell. CUP, 1983 and 1984). This is a favourable notice of a two part general English course for students at Intermediate and Upper Intermediate levels which the reviewers have tested in the classroom. The course is designed to reach Cambridge FCE level and is said to be "the most effective general English textbook to have appeared for a long time." The reviewers suggest that the authors' awareness of the pitfalls of a purely structural or a purely notional/functional approach result in an eclectic approach which incorporates authentic materials and realistic language situations. They describe such an approach as giving "an equal emphasis on both the system and its application: on the words and their meaning."

iii) SCAN

Southern and Central African Newsletter of English for Academic Purposes was born in February 1986 and will be followed, according to the editors, by another issue in a year's time. "Its purpose is to provide a focus for language - learning and study-related problems at tertiary level and to provide a publishing outlet for the region." (Editorial).

The first issue of the newsletter contains three articles and some news about the English Language Survey conducted in Zimbabwe by the Ministry of Education and the British Council in 1985. The first article examines why students have problems with identifying and correcting errors of content in written statements, even when they possess the necessary knowledge of subject matter. The second looks into the problem of subjectivity in the marking of essays and attempts to suggest some ways of reducing discrepancies between markers. The last article gives a useful review of EAP materials and throws doubts on whether there is "a state-of-the art" as regards EAP materials.

The issue closes with a call for contributions.

SCAN is at present produced by the Communication Skills Centre, Department of Linguistics, P.O. Box MP 167 Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe. The intention, however, is to rotate the responsibility of its production amongst the various centres in the region.

b) Items Received

i) We have received from John Swales of the English Language Institute, the University of Michigan, a research note with the title 'ESP in the Big World of Reprint Requests' (the ESP Journal Vol 5, No. 1, 1986). The research emanated from a previous article published in Scientometrics (Swales, 1985) which discussed the proportion of research papers published by non-native speakers. The article elicited a big number of reprint requests (35), but according to Swales, not big enough for the Big World of Reprint Requests. Those who requested Swales for reprints were, of course, unaware that Swales was scrutinizing their request cards for utilitarian purposes. Very innovatively, Swales has added to the ESP area a new genre with its acronym R R s and has suggested a special format to be used.

ii) Brims J (1986) Speaking 3, in Cassell's Foundation Skills Series

Cassell: Eastbourne, UK

Part of a series of 16 supplementary books in the 'four skills', with 4 levels in each skill area, intended for elementary to intermediate levels. There is a students' and a teacher's version of this book, the latter including methodological notes and an exercise key. The layout is reasonably attractive, with black and white photographs and line-drawings accompanying the exercises in each unit, many of which are of the 'write-in-book' type, with printed answer frames.

Speaking 3 contains 10 units, each based on a theme, and dealing with a particular structural or (sometimes) functional feature - e.g. Unit 6 "Going Out" - making suggestions; present perfect and past tenses contrasted. Each unit moves from fairly closely controlled exercises practising the structure/function of the unit, to less controlled pair-work communication activities, generally involving discussion and decision-making. Most units also include a 'mini-dialogue', available on cassette.

More information from Cassell Ltd, 1 St. Anne's Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3UN, UK.

iii) We have received a new dictionary entitled English -

Arabic Dictionary of Computer Terms by Firas H. Ali, published by Edward Arnold (1986). The dictionary contains 2000 computer terms given in both English and Arabic, with an Arabic explanation of the terms. This is particularly useful for Arabic students of computer studies whose English may not be adequate for understanding explanations in English. The Arabic explanation will be quicker to grasp than an explanation given in English, which itself may require recourse to another dictionary in order to be understood.

The English - Arabic Dictionary of Computer Terms is of particular value to those engaged in the translation of computer studies into Arabic.

The dictionary is well-produced and has appendices for ASC II character set, Flowchart symbols and Logic Gate symbols.

iv) We have received from Larry Selinker of the English Language Institute, University of Michigan, a reminder of the University of Michigan Conference on Applied Linguistics (October 9, 10, 11, 1987) advertised in our last issue of ESPMENA. "The purpose of this Conference is to consider relationships between language variation and second language acquisition studies from the perspectives of both fields." Those interested could contact the conference co-ordinators:

Susan Gass, Dennis Preston, Larry Selinker

at the English Language Institute, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109.

v) As the EMP Newsletter representative for Sudan, Sheena Gardner of the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, Gezira University in Sudan, has passed on to us an appeal for correspondents from the EMP Newsletter.

The birth of the EMP Newsletter was announced in ESPMENA as early as issue No. 17, 1984. We continue to think very highly of EMP and would like to thank its editor, Nigel Bruce, for the exchange arrangements between ESPMENA and EMP.

RELC REGIONAL SEMINAR

The Role of Language Education in Human Resource Development

Singapore, 13 - 16 April 1987

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (SEAMEO) REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE (RELC) WILL HOLD ITS 22ND REGIONAL SEMINAR, 13-16 APRIL 1987, IN SINGAPORE. THE THEME OF THE SEMINAR IS "THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT"

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR ARE :

* TO REVIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES AND THEIR LITERATURES, IN FORMAL AS WELL AS NON-FORMAL SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION, WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THE GOALS OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

* TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY, CURRICULUM DESIGN, MATERIALS PRODUCTION, TEACHER-TRAINING, EVALUATION, ETC. RELATED TO FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL PROGRAMMES OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

* TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE DIFFERENT PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE PLANNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL/NATIONAL/OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGES OF WIDER COMMUNICATION, AND THE LITERATURES IN THESE LANGUAGES, CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO OTHER ASPECTS OF PLANNING FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, SUCH AS TECHNO-ECONOMIC PLANNING, MANPOWER PLANNING ETC.

* TO PROMOTE INTERACTION AMONG TEACHERS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, LANGUAGE PLANNERS AND ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALISTS IN OTHER DISCIPLINES CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, e.g. ECONOMIC PLANNING, INDUSTRIAL TRAINING, MANAGEMENT, ETC.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SEMINAR CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

DIRECTOR
(ATTENTION: CHAIRMAN
SEMINAR PLANNING COMMITTEE)
SEAMEO REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE
RELC BUILDING
30 ORANGE GROVE ROAD
SINGAPORE 1025
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

NO.24 AUGUST 1987

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english for special purposes in the middle east & north africa

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15 March 15 October

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Contributors are asked to note that, in view of our policy of publishing with the minimum delay, and of the time normally required for an exchange of correspondence, we reserve the right to excerpt, condense and make minor alterations to contributions unless they are clearly marked as not to be altered; in the latter case, permission will be sought for any changes.

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1. ARTICLES

a) A NOTE ON RESEARCH IN AN EAP WRITING CLINIC

Larry Selinker
English Language Institute
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In an earlier issue of this Bulletin (Selinker, 1986), I argued that language for specific purposes (LSP) and interlanguage (IL) studies in second language acquisition (SLA) need each other and to date have by-and-large ignored each other. I further argued that the lack is mutual and that the situation has been unfortunate. I will not repeat these arguments here.

What I want to report now is an improvement in the situation. The editors of the *English for Specific Purposes* Journal invited Dan Douglas and me to do a special issue (6.2, 1987) on the general topic of the relationship between these two fields, with an emphasis on empirical studies. The response to the call for papers was very encouraging indeed and eight studies appear in that issue, which will be available by the time this note appears. The studies are described and brought together conceptually in Selinker and Douglas (1987).

Here I want to briefly report on a research project in an EAP Writing Clinic, described as "the Detlef project" (after the name of our informant) in Selinker & Vivanco (1987). The subject, a native speaker of German in his mid-twenties, is an MA student in political science at the University of Michigan. He spent 1984-85 as an exchange student at the University and returned in 1986 to do graduate work. He self-selected into the Clinic through a campus newspaper ad. His speaking ability in English is excellent. From an initial interview, he stated that writing in English is important to him, not only for his studies, but for a possible post-doctoral grant and, eventually, he wishes to publish in English. Throughout our interactions, he was continually positive about Clinic work and the case study research to the point of making important suggestions for improvement of both.

The area we are concerned with then is that of NNS Writing Clinic work where increased readability and comprehensibility <u>for the subject professor</u> in technical language that is deemed acceptable becomes the desired result.

As a result of this work, we have learned some things about LSP content and about LSP research methodology. In terms of content, we have learned that in writing which is still being formulated, hidden agendas involve a complex interaction of subject content and rhetorical strategies, especially if the student wants to challenge something traditional in his field and does not have the rhetorical/IL means of doing so. We discovered that in still-to-be-formulated writing, "purpose statements" are not as simple as a "safe rule" (SR) approach (cf. Selinker, Kumaravadivelu & Miller, 1986) to them might indicate. One must first of all distinguish between overall purpose of a work and

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relevant sub-purposes. To our surprise in this study, the student ended up integrating a "purpose" statement with a conclusion" statement and then transforming the former into the latter. Perhaps we were being naive, but as far as we are aware, this rhetorical linkage has not been previously discussed in the LSP literature. We also learned that with technical terms we are often in the realm of "we don't know what we don't know" (Selinker, 1979) and that in such work, we might have to relate to localized (and not necessarily field-wide) phenomena. We thought that a central term in the student's assignment had its common language meaning and discovered (and it was a sort of detective story) that it had special signification in the particular context, which totally threw off our tutoring until we cleared it up. We were only able to clear it up with our subject-specialist informant (SSI) when the term was contrasted to another (and unexpected) term in the context.

We learned something about native speaker (NS) reader adjustments to IL writing. We learned that in some academic contexts IL writing is more expected than in others and that NS adjustments to such writing may be made and that, here too, the type may be unexpected and will affect the efficacy of the suggested writing strategies. We suspected a possible "garden path" situation where fossilization might be enhanced and "covert errors" (cf. Corder, 1981) might predominate. We learned how little we know about helping students move through "top down" strategies, where in successive drafts, learner intention becomes clearer at the content and rhetorical choice level, but the IL means, in terms of target language precision <u>in that context,</u> do not automatically follow. In spite of the ESP nightmare of having to provide individual instruction for each discipline and sub-discipline that could be represented at the Clinic, we thought through the task of providing the student with self-editing materials and developed a "student self-analysis" sheet which we are prepared to make available to colleagues. We found some help in developing a view of IL text as changing and changeable in the series of studies in Connor & Kaplan (1987). They present a most useful discussion of "text" as "an extremely complex structure".

In terms of LSP research methodology, we were reconvinced that to work on student writing that is to be judged in the context of the subject specialism, we must develop explicit procedures for talking to SSIs about the changes that we recommend to our mutual students for their academic written work. We had to admit a major deficiency in gaining desired information. We need to work on our level of precision of questioning. We need to discover whether what is not clear to us in the student writing is or is not clear to the SSI professor. We had a difficult time gaining such information.

We ended up suggesting a research procedure that involved the following steps: first, we read student draft 1 and ask him/her to fill out a student self-analysis sheet. We then write a summary of the suggested SRs (and our reasons for each) related to that draft based on interview data and discussion of the self-analysis sheet with the student. We must be careful to understand intended message as it first

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appears in student writing. Then we look at draft 2 to see if the suggested SRs have been implemented and how. Here we must be open to changes in intended message as the student's own research proceeds.

Next we bring the packet of draft 1, student self-analysis sheet, suggested SRs and draft 2 to the SSI without the student being present. We ask, in this audio-taped interview, if draft 2 is better in specific ways and how (if) the suggested changes were needed and why. It is our guess that going through the student self-analysis sheet with the SSI, away from expository academic prose, will help clarify for the EAP specialist some of the technical points, the content and rhetorical organization factors, needed to work with student academic composing processes and should aid the SSI with entering our "we don't know what we don't know" realm. Obviously, a case study here would prove helpful.

We realized that we must strive for that mutual common ground which has made SSI work successful in the past. One suggestion that has worked in the past (cf. the genetics example in Selinker, 1979) is presenting the SSI with one or two relevant LSP/EST papers. But in that case, what we were after was an understanding of journal articles that our mutual students had to read. In this new area of NNS Writing Clinic work, we found we had nothing relevant to give our informants to read, and will perhaps have to write such material.

One thing that remains unclear to us is whether we should in principle always start first with an oral student consultation. We can make an argument either way. This may be one of those applied linguistic matters which will be decided by experience and not by theory.

This should not be surprising since an important point to note is that research on Writing Clinics (also called Writing Centers and Writing Labs) is in its infancy (see e.g. North, 1984). In fact, as far as non-native speakers (NNSs) in Writing Clinics are concerned, we are at a very early stage indeed and colleagues who run such Clinics by their own admission (pc) are in the dark concerning questions such as pedagogical content of the Clinic, training for tutors, relationship to Writing Clinics for NSs, as well as appropriate considerations regarding "success". It has become our premise that success of our tutoring must be judged primarily by teachers of the subject specialisms. In terms of research, we find ourselves interested in empirical studies which look at the effectiveness of NNS Clinic tutoring related to success in particular disciplines. We know of no such studies.

We have begun to fill this research gap by doing this detailed case study of this student who was preparing and writing papers in his subject while attending ½ hour weekly sessions at the Clinic. Writing Clinic tutoring of this kind when carried to its logical conclusion is the "EAP nightmare" since it implies an infinite regress in that each EAP student must have an individual teaching experience. This point is discussed in the EAP literature (cf. Alderson & Hughes, 1981, passim). Here we face directly the following question: how can we in ESL/EFL

provide individual EAP written tutorial experience related to the student's on-going course work without understanding the concepts of the discipline and without knowing something of what is expected for success in the discipline in general and in that course in particular (which might not be the same thing)? Must the teaching be all individual or is there particular work that all (some?, which?) students might need for success in their course work and what might that be? Specifically, is it reasonable to expect that explicit rhetorical instruction (topic statement, comparison and contrast, definition, classification, etc.) is bound to help most NNS students who show up at the Clinic with writing problems?

In order to deal with this LSP/IL area, we feel that Clinic instructors must somehow gain <u>principled</u> access to the content professors of our Clinic students. Otherwise, we are convinced that we will be working in an unacceptable vacuum. What might appear wrong or be unclear or incomprehensible to us in ESL/EFL might turn out to be quite acceptable and even the norm in a particular discipline. What this means is that we must continue to develop explicit procedures for talking to colleagues in the subject disciplines about the changes in writing that we recommend to our mutual students. Another thing we need to have explicit detail on is the effect of our pedagogical input in terms of SRs as they relate to clarity and comprehensibility of the student's product in the particular academic experience concerned. Explicit procedures for gaining technical content and relevant rhetorical information would be useful for we need to know from research when pedagogical intervention has a good chance of being profitable and when it does not.

The references at the end of this note trace some of the SSI procedures in the EAP literature from cyclical principles, to the choice of texts to be studied, to doing a "quick and dirty" analysis, to criteria for the "good" SSI, to working from a pre-informant to a post-informant session, to "negotiating a new reality" with the SSI, to the problem of differing information from differing informants, - all of this involving too much detail to present here. We refer the interested reader to these sources and their citations. One result for the EAP specialist who is tutoring a student in a new discipline, as pointed out by Swales (1987), is that such procedures help the EAP teacher get out of the bind of "I don't know what I don't know".

In the final analysis the goal of our exploratory study must concern research methodology as much as it does content. How are we to research an area important to students, an area where no research at all seems to have been done? We would like to link up with others who are interested in this type of research. We hope we are wrong and that there exist other empirical studies of NNS Writing Clinic work which link Clinic work to success in the subject specialism. We would like to know of other EAP/IL studies which look at the interactive effects of Clinic tutoring of successive learner written drafts on increased readability and comprehensibility for the subject professor, increased readability and comprehensibility in precise and acceptable academic prose, though it may be IL prose.

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4. Discussion of "safe rule" teaching in ESL/EFL composition:

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5. Discussion of "covert errors" in interlanguage:

Corder, S.P. (1981) — *Error Analysis and Interlanguage.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

6. Discussion of the creation of written interlanguage texts:

Connor, U. & R.B. Kaplan (1987) — *Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text.* Reading: Addison-Wesley

7. Discussion of research in writing clinics:

North, S. (1984) — Writing Center Research: Testing our Assumptions. In *Writing Centers: Theory and Administration.* Gary Olson, ed. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English

A newsletter entitled "Writing Lab Newsletter" has been created to chronicle research and its implications for teaching. It can be ordered from Muriel Harris, Dept. of English, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA.

PALM. = Papers in Applied Linguistics - Michigan and may be ordered from the English Language Institute, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA.

b) The Structure of Oral Presentations

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It is a feature of student life at many universities that both undergraduates and postgraduates are obliged to give oral presentations of, say, project work to groups of their peers and tutors. At our own university these presentations often form part of the assessment. It is also a feature of life in many of the professions that the oral presentation as a genre is necessary - the businessman reporting to his board of directors, the headmaster addressing a parents' evening, the

engineer in industry "selling" his latest idea to the marketing section, and the lecturer in Higher Education all have occasion to make some kind of oral presentation as part of their daily professional life.

Yet students, whether native-speakers of a language or not, often receive little assistance in this crucial skill, either as part of their education or as part of their in-service training at the workplace. The Aston University Language Studies Unit carries out short courses in oral presentation, mostly for native-speakers with a few near native-speaker overseas students in a few departments, but such provision, though more common than it was a few years ago, is often lacking. Recently, we have used the same techniques we employ for these classes with various groups of overseas students, among them low-intermediate Japanese students of Management, multi-lingual groups in Study Skills classes, intermediate and advanced, and groups of Algerian graduate students in various engineering disciplines. We concentrate on this last group, which in any case has been the most interesting. We should stress, however, that though oral presentations with elementary-level EFL students are, as far as we know, relatively rare, the broad outlines of the kind of work we describe here are not particularly original. Where oral presentations are taught at all, they are taught in something like this way, or taught badly. However, there is almost no research in ELT in this area, almost no commercially-produced material (though Longman have recently published *Visitron* for use with students of Business English), and insufficient recognition either in Britain or overseas of the importance of the oral presentation.

I.

For several years Aston University has been one of a number of institutions in the U.K. which have had the privilege of hosting groups of around a dozen Algerian students (typically recently-graduated Ingenieurs d'Etat in our case) who spend one complete session studying the English language before going on to Master's courses in Britain. These are long and hard-working courses (over 900 hours) with clever and highly-motivated students, whom we expect to take from complete beginner, in a few cases, to around a standard of 6-7 on the British Council ELTS test by the end of the course. More importantly from the students' point of view we expect to find them places in British universities and to use their year with us to integrate them into British university life. Therefore in addition to their regular English course, students for instance attend lectures in their subject discipline and work at the Computer Centre. It is crucial to our effort and theirs that they are treated as British students as quickly as possible. Hence our eagerness to give them oral presentation work as early as can be managed: not only will it be instrumentally useful to them in future because they will be required to do it as part of their Master's programme, it is useful simply because it is something that British students often do. And, more important still, it creates the opportunity for students to practise text organisation often before

they are capable of producing an extended piece of writing in accurate English.

All students are asked to undertake regular presentations for us. The first takes place at an early stage in their studies (after about 7 weeks). On each occasion the choice of subject is decided by the students, in consultation with the teacher. On the second and subsequent occasions it must be on some subject directly related to their subject discipline, and towards the end of the course it is tied to a substantial written project which is the students' main task in their final term. Titles for these presentations have included "Corrosion and Oxidisation of Alloys"; "An Introduction to Local Area Networks"; "Compiler Construction Tools, and Processes"; "Communication and Synchronisation" and so on. On the first occasion it need not be related to work, and is not tied to a written project. Thus for this first oral presentation, with students who are typically around low intermediate level at this stage, we have had such presentation titles as: "Solar Energy"; "Earthquakes"; "Robots, Advantages and Disadvantages" - and even "The Best Way To Travel Round The World". Students often choose subjects not related to work if they have the chance: in fact, they often have more success if they go for a professional topic. This is particularly so with (French-speaking) Algerian students, who have a great deal of positive transfer of technical lexis to assist them.

An oral presentation module follows the same format: in what follows we are describing the first of these presentations, since this kind of work is, we believe, less common and more interesting with lower level students.

II

A lecture is given by the class teacher on how to do oral presentations: students are then given a few days to prepare their presentations, which they are told must last around 7 minutes: then each student in turn gives his/her presentation to the rest of the class. The presentations are videoed, and there is immediate feedback from the rest of the class, preferably in English, though we accept French for the first of the sessions. We have experimented with relaying the video or parts of it to the class immediately, but are coming to the conclusion that this destroys the rhythm of the class. We are therefore beginning to treat the videos as self-access material for the students.

Some preliminary points to note. The teacher's initial lecture session serves a variety of functions:

a) It gives the students information on how to conduct oral presentations.

b) It <u>enacts</u> that information because the teacher's talk is itself, of course, an oral presentation. We have experimented with setting aside a five-minute period of this initial session for the teacher to

deliberately present badly: this period is immediately followed by feedback from the students.

c) It demonstrates to the students that even when their own English is fairly elementary, they can actually understand a carefully structured lecture, particularly one backed up by good use of visuals.

d) Since an oral presentation gives information in a form which cannot be revised, since a word, a phrase, a point of information, once spoken, cannot be recalled for study, students must listen for content, not language, for information, not grammar. There is no opportunity for them to analyse, because the lecture continues. We describe this general listening skill which we want our students to develop as the strategy of "listening quickly": it is obviously a skill they will need in their postgraduate careers.

We aim in this initial lecture to give our students information about, or help them to think about and be aware of, three main areas:
a) logistical problems;
b) structuring and signalling;
c) visual material.

Notice that "using language correctly" is not a targeted skill. We are not concerned with microlinguistic accuracy nor, for that matter, to any great extent with the opposite pole of Brumfit's compass, fluency, which we take to be essentially an attribute of unrehearsed language use, that is to say, language use which does not have any major organisational structure preimposed upon it. Our main aim is overtly cognitive and organisational. We do not aim to help students to present information in an error-free fashion or with particular speed and linguistic confidence (the two attributes of fluency most easily recognised: a reduction of an important skill to a kind of thoughtless words-per-minutery): we aim to help them to present information in an organised and lucid fashion. This is a communication skill, not a language skill. Students with poor English are often rather good at it, first year native-speaker undergraduates are, as we know from experience, often dreadful at it.

For our students, however, the task is to present a sometimes relatively complex content by good organisational and presentational techniques. This is done by succeeding with each of the three elements we mention. We shall discuss each in turn.

Logistical decisions

This phrase simply reflects our insistence that students who are almost invariably unaccustomed to standing up and talking in public should make careful, conscious and deliberate decisions about such fundamental matters as whether to stand up or sit down, about where in the room to position themselves (can they be seen? are they obscuring an OHP screen?) and so on.

Communication skills manuals, incidentally, often suggest that

speakers should look at individuals in their audience, to make them "feel included". We have found that a substantial minority of students fix either the teacher or a single close friend in the audience (or the video camera) with a beady and slightly desperate stare throughout - a very discomforting experience. And we both personally dislike being singled out by a speaker when we are in an audience - a guilty and entirely spurious look of interest creeps across our faces and, after a few seconds, we begin to nod in embarrassed agreement. We therefore advise our students to look between individuals rather than at them: in this way nobody is being looked at but everybody thinks someone is - and everybody is happy.

Signalling

The frame of reference for much of the work that has been done on oral presentation is Communication Skills (to native speakers) rather than ELT. However, Communication Skills, though it draws on a refreshingly wide range of disciplines for its rationale (from media studies to social psychology), is often methodologically naive. An embarrassing amount of even the most recently published work offers exhortations rather than advice ("How do I improve my writing?" "Be lucid!") as if a football coach were to advise his team to win by scoring more goals.

A strategy is rather more helpful. The best way to make students lucid is to help them to organise their material. And the best way to do this is to insist that they use signalling devices. Thus students are giving the following information (in fact they see a very similar OHP transparency, while the teacher talks them through it):

1) Introduction

a) State what you will do (your subject)

Today I want to consider.....
I shall be { thinking about.....
{ discussing.....
I would like to concentrate on.....

b) State how you will do it (your procedure)

First/second.....finally I shall look at
Then I would like to glance at

2) Body

a) Have a list of points

b) Frame and/or Focus each point

Frame

Now
Right
Well

Focus

Firstly
Secondly
Finally

I want to turn to
Let's consider

An interesting feature
An important)point
A significant)

3) Conclusion

Summarise:
First we looked at..... and I suggested
Then we considered..... and I argued

It will be remembered that this information is given to students in the first instance by their teacher, so they have a chance to see it in action (and with a bit of luck, in successful action!). Underpinning this approach, clearly, is the Sinclair/Coulthard model of discourse analysis - we have borrowed their terms "frame" and "focus", and also the work on the structure of lectures by Martin Montgomery. These terms have in fact passed into quite common use in the Communication Skills area - Aston staff, in general, have been using them for some years. The function of a "frame" is to signal a change in the direction of a talk - to tell the audience that a new subject is being discussed.

We make two crucial claims here. Firstly, that by insisting a student uses a piece of language we are precipitating a well-organised presentation. We have no cases (either on our Algerian courses or on any of the others with NL or FL users) of students receiving negative feedback from their peers when these signalling devices are used. That is to say, by insistence on a surface feature - an organising device - we are rendering all but inevitable a deep feature - organisation. A linguistic device has cognitive implications. We would stress that this holds true for NS users as well.

There is, however, one important caveat here. Students who signal by using the correct framing word without appropriate intonation do receive negative feedback. It appears that the intonation (typically a sequence of pause before the signal word plus a higher pitch and increased loudness at its onset) is an essential part of the signal. Without an intonation change the audience is unclear that a new subject (a new verbal paragraph, as it were) has begun, and they are therefore unsure of the structure of the talk.

The second claim we make is that by insisting on the use of organising devices in this way we make the students' language more comprehensible because the organisers give the listener frequent points of reference - to continue the "signalling" metaphor, frequent

signposts through what may be a fairly dense forest of microlinguistic errors. By the same token, the student can use the signalling devices as props and encouragements. In practice, it can sometimes seem almost that a student looks on the next organiser as the light at the end of the tunnel: and there is no doubt that if s/he runs out of things to say, a potential fiasco can be easily avoided with a confident, "That's all I want to say on this topic".

In effect, at this fairly elementary level, the organisers are intended to serve much the same function as the given bits of text in certain Guided Composition books. The learner is, essentially, "filling in the blanks" between organisers. Our aim, in other words, was to teach the student to use organising devices as stepping-stones between bits of content. However, the very concept of organising spoken language is so novel, that there is a tendency for students to concentrate on content rather than structure.

Visual Material

The use of visual material is the second point the teacher stresses in the initial lecture. There are, we believe, four reasons why visual material should be used in this sort of presentation. First, it assists the process of organisation. Students are almost always nervous when they make oral presentations: the visual material they have prepared beforehand in the tranquillity of their room acts in class as a stabiliser. Students do not, it appears, make visual material and then, during their presentation, decide not to use it. Second, visual material is a useful way of reminding students that they must think, as a student and as a professional person, not of something as narrow as language, but of all aspects of communication. Our oral presentation classes are perceived as exercises in communication for those who will soon be practising electrical engineers in their own country; in an environment, that is, where they will not have language difficulties, but may still have communication problems. Thirdly, there is, quite simply, a lot of material in the subject discipline which is either graphic by its very nature - like a circuit diagram - or which cannot be presented without some form of visual display as back-up - a computer program, or a formula, for example. Fourthly, and most obviously, where language is limited, a picture, a diagram, a graph or even language prepared and written down at leisure can be of vital assistance.

We particularly stress the use of the OHP, simply because students give their oral presentations in classrooms where these are available: and we indicate three ways in which they can be useful.

Firstly, they (or any visual display) are useful for material which cannot be better expressed through language. This in fact is what our students take to be the function of the OHP.

Secondly, and much more importantly, OHP slides can be used to indicate the structure of a talk to the audience. We encourage students to list the main points of each section of their talk on an OHP slide

for this reason. In this way, the audience know exactly where they are in the talk, the speaker is constrained by the list to develop his or her presentation in an organised way, and the speaker can use the slide as a reminder of what comes next.

Thirdly, there are the more adventurous uses to which the OHP can be put. Thus we have had - though not from our Algerians - such things as a talk on yacht racing illustrated by paper cut-outs of yachts being manoeuvred round the OHP, as well as the more commonplace superimposition of one slide on another.

III

This, then, is the format we use, and have generally found successful, as have others. In particular, we have found it succeeds at a very early stage in a student's English career.

It must be said, however, that there is little understanding of what exactly constitutes a successful or unsuccessful oral presentation: as is too often the case in ESP work the teacher makes classroom prescriptions informed by a tiny research base. There is the stimulating work which may not be familiar to those with an ELT background by Maxwell Atkinson in both research and training, but little else. It would be interesting to know, for instance, what makes a presentation boring. We guess, at the moment, that lack of variation in intonation, particularly at those points where a new subject is introduced, is the biggest factor, but do not know. We guess, that is, that to call a presentation "monotonous" is more than a metaphor.

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2. REVIEWS

a) *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach*
Hutchinson, Tom & Alan Waters
Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp 183

ESP, at least as seen by those of us who are teachers, is a practical enterprise in which the problem is how to identify the 'what' to the 'how' and to match these in such a way as to ensure that learning takes place. This would seem fairly non-contentious. The problem is that ESP theory has not kept pace with ESP practice, despite

the fact that over the years, various schools have made notable contributions to our understanding.

In their book *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach*, Hutchinson and Waters discuss (see chapter 2) four approaches to ESP, based respectively on register-analysis, discourse analysis, needs analysis (or, as Hutchinson and Waters would have it, 'target-situation analysis'), and skills. Each of these constituted in their time small breakthroughs, and all of them continue to be objects of theoretical study and to be widely influential in the complex process of ESP course-design. But, say Hutchinson and Waters, they suffer from the fatal flaw that they are concerned with 'language use' rather than with 'language learning'. Attention must be shifted from analysing features of the 'target situation', whether in terms of the kinds of language or skills which the situation appears to demand, or even in terms of what constitutes the sociolinguistic context of communication, and instead should be focused on the 'learning situation'. Hence the sub-title of the book.

The 'learning-centred approach' thus involves a shift of focus, with much greater attention than before being paid to the how and why of learning the language, and correspondingly less to the 'what' in terms of either the language or skills needed. Although the content of courses will continue to include work on necessary structures and patterns of discourse, and to be based on a variety of types of input, involving practice of different skills, neither the language nor the skills are seen as being ends in themselves. What matters primarily is learning, and syllabuses, materials and methodology must be conceived with this in mind. By considering each of these in turn, an idea of what is distinctive about the authors' approach can be gained.

On the question of syllabuses, there is an evident gap between what constitutes a syllabus as the statement of a theoretical ideal, and the reality of what people actually learn. Hutchinson and Waters are right to draw attention to this, since traditionally we have thought of syllabuses as more or less abstract lists specifying what a learner is expected to know by the end of a course, together with a notion of progression between topics, either purely linear or with some recycling. Syllabuses, in other words, are traditionally teacher- rather than learner-centred. As a consequence 'a syllabus can only constitute an approximate statement of what will be taught ... it can predict very little about what will be learnt' (ibid. p 85).

So far so good. But it is unclear how Hutchinson and Waters plan to make syllabuses work in order to respond to a varied set of learning agenda. Part of the problem is that they have nothing detailed to say about how the nature of classroom interaction, and the characteristics of the teacher and the individual learners each affect the learning process. But more important in terms of the aims of the book is the wide discrepancy between their view of a syllabus as encompassing a wide range of language and learning variables (the all-inclusive view) and the syllabus considered in direct relation to materials design, where the two exist in a sort of symbiotic relation, but only a limited

number of variables are allowed to interact. There is a gap, in other words, between the syllabus as an abstraction and the syllabus which informs the practical task of course and materials design.

The all-inclusive view is exemplified in the section on needs-analysis. Once we have a satisfactory description of language (on structural, functional and discoursal levels) and an adequate theory of learning (primarily 'cognitive code', but taking account also of affective factors), what remains is the need to specify what Hutchinson and Waters term the 'target situation' and the 'learning situation'. Data on these will be obtained via the needs analysis. Together, this amalgam of data and theory comprises the input to the design of the syllabus.

The problem, of course, is one of too much unassimilated data. The authors castigate the traditional form of needs-analysis as concentrating solely on the target-situation - topics and skills which are relevant to the situations of language-use the student will encounter outside the classroom - and ignoring 'learning needs'. Even if some consideration is normally given to what learners want, and why, little or no attention is paid to this information, and, as a result, information about the target-situation tends to be the sole determiner of the syllabus. Even if we accept this claim, and I for one consider it unjustified, surely the reason why course designers operate with a restricted range of input-data is precisely because by doing so, the whole process becomes manageable. Hutchinson and Waters speak about the importance of learners' 'wants' but they give no indication of how to collect information from the learners directly, or how to balance competing wishes. Without some indication of how to handle the increased amount of data, syllabus-design would appear an intractable problem.

Similarly, we are told that in view of the complexity of language and of the teaching/learning process, it is desirable to draw up separate syllabuses, each considering a different aspect of what is to be learned. Thus we would have syllabuses for the functional and structural aspects of language, skills and strategies, syllabuses based on topics or situations, and so on. But how, one must ask, can these be combined to produce something coherent in the end? The authors may be right in thinking that such an enterprise is possible, but many of us would be grateful for some practical tips.

The discussion comes down to earth when the syllabus is considered in relation to the process of materials design. This section gives considerable insight into the actual processes involved, illustrated by examples from the authors' own materials. The starting-point may be a Topic, for example 'Pumps'. This topic suggests a focal Task - 'describing a system'. Other topics will suggest different focal tasks, and this collection of topics and tasks constitutes one kind of syllabus which the authors have found productive.

Having decided on a suitable Topic and focal Task, the next step is to find a Text. A suitable text is one which will interest the

students and will also lend itself to a range of activities and exercises related to the Task towards which each Unit leads. It should also exemplify some useful language structures, functions, or discourse features. To check this, it is necessary to have an independent language-based syllabus. If a text does not match up to all these requirements, then some revamping will be necessary. In the Unit on 'Pumps', a conventional, rather dull text on the workings of the heart was transformed into a cartoon strip in which the characters are individual blood-cells. This allowed a whole series of exercises to be devised which led the students gradually towards recreating something like the original, conventional text for themselves.

This creative blending of syllabus and materials-design seems to me to be admirable. Too often the two are disconnected. The authors are at their best when exemplifying a pragmatic approach. Not for them a dogmatic adherence to the 'authenticity' of texts. They take the view that all texts used in the ESP classroom are inauthentic, since they are removed from their original context. Debate about authenticity is therefore both futile and spurious. What matters is that texts should be interesting (to both teacher and students) and also appropriate in terms of content, language, and the kind of exploitation which is possible.

It is in the sections dealing with Materials and Methodology that the blending of theory and practice is most successful. The selection and ordering of exercises reveals careful thought, informed by a concern for how people learn. From the examples given of a series of exercises based on the concept of 'pumping systems', and the analysis by the authors of what each exercise attempts to do, I found it possible to pick out at least four underlying principles which are helpful in the task of sequencing activities:

1. Make use of the learners' pre-existing knowledge by means of some open-ended discussion before presenting the topic. Later, after presenting the text, and basic comprehension has been checked, give the students an exercise that forces them to connect what they have picked up with what they already knew, e.g. an activity involving making analogies.

2. Encourage students to first think about the topic in order to understand it; only later, introduce language exercises (in the authors' approach, these are tied in with the focal Task at the end of a Unit).

3. Throughout, proceed from guided towards more open-ended activities.

4. Move from analysis of input towards activities involving synthesis of information by the students. (The culmination of this is here provided by the Task.)

If a concern for 'learning' lies at the centre of Materials design, then the cornerstone of Methodology is 'communication'. The

The authors are firmly committed to the communicative view of language teaching. At the same time, what learners are required to do in various communicative activities should reflect a series of beliefs about learning. The chapter on Methodology sets out a list of 'basic principles of language-learning' and also a list of essentials for a communicative approach. It is good to see learning principles, albeit very general ones such as 'language-learning is an active process' and 'language-learning is a decision-making process' being talked about, and, one assumes, actually thought about, in connection with the design of materials based on the by-now familiar concept of 'gaps'. However, the authors' interesting classification of types of 'gap' - 'information gaps', 'media gaps', 'reasoning gaps', 'memory gaps', 'opinion gaps' and 'certainty gaps' - would seem to beg more questions than it answers. What kinds of cognitive processes are involved in each of these types of activity, and what is their relation to language-learning? Until such questions are addressed by detailed studies, communicative approaches will lack a firm base.

It seems to me that the authors are most persuasive when dealing with the solution of practical problems arising from their own work as materials-designers. They are on much less sure ground when attempting to fit their theoretical views on the importance of learning factors into general procedures for the course-designer to follow. This is so almost inevitably, since individuals learn in different ways, and a truly learning- centred approach would therefore amount to a learner-centred approach in which the demands of overall course-design take second place to the needs of individuals. At several points in the book,it appears that it is the latter which represents the authors' ideal, but ultimately, since this is unattainable in institutional contexts, we must be satisfied with an approach which at least takes account of some general notions about learning and the 'wants' of a majority of students. This is rather disappointing.

There are several points in the book where one has the feeling that more is being claimed for the authors' approach than it can in fact provide. It is claimed that the approach goes beyond 'the competence which enables someone to perform' to try to tap the sources of 'how someone acquires that competence'. Yet the very generalized theory of learning that is presented cannot seriously be considered a basis for this. Even if the general outlines are correct, much more needs to be said about language-learning in particular, and about the development of interlanguage, to justify such a claim. As Selinker has pointed out in the last issue of this journal, much research needs to be done on the development of interlanguage within an ESP framework.

Again, claims are made for parts of the model which are not substantiated by the amount of detail provided. For example:

> 'the role of needs analysis in a skills-centred approach is twofold. Firstly, it provides a basis for discovering the underlying competence that enables people to perform in the target situation. Secondly, it enables the course designer to discover the potential knowledge and abilities that the learners bring to the ESP classroom.' (p 70)

However, neither the skeleton list for 'target needs' nor that for 'learning needs' (on pages 59 and 62 respectively) provide anything like the depth of information that would be needed.

Or take the statement that 'a syllabus .... [framed in terms of language structures or skills, for instance] .... tells the teacher and the student not only what is to be learnt, but, implicitly, why it is to be learnt. (p 84) This seems to me not only misleading, in the sense that it does not reflect reality, but also distinctly presumptuous and authoritarian.

On occasion, the authors make broad statements which appear in the guise of scientific generalizations, while they are in fact statements of opinion.

> 'ESP is not a particular type of language, or methodology, nor does it consist of a particular type of teaching material.' (p 19)

Here the authors accurately describe their own approach, but this is hardly a statement which would be widely accepted as a summary of what ESP means to most of its practitioners. There are many types of discourse which groups of ESP students may need to be proficient in interpreting and producing, and with which an average native-speaker may experience difficulty, for example, technical reports and legal documents. These types of text would not feature in mainstream EFL courses at any proficiency level. On methodology, it can be argued that team-teaching of the kind described by Johns and Dudley-Evans, for instance, is distinct from team-teaching of the kind found in EFL: instead of two EFL teachers who may exploit the set-up for effective demonstration of role-plays, or simply more effective monitoring of groupwork, there is one EFL teacher and one subject specialist, with the latter assuming the same role as instructor/lecturer as in the normal subject-classroom or laboratory situation. On the level of teaching materials, there are also some differences, in my experience, between the ESP and the EFL context: exercises in writing, at least for students of Science, tend to be much more tightly constrained by demands of both form and content than is the case in EFL generally, and this is because of particular characteristics of the target-situation.

The authors also take the view that there is (i.e. ought to be) little difference between the type of ESP taught to students in different disciplines.

> 'In terms of language content, there is little justification for a subject-specific approach to ESP.' (p 166)

The only empirical justification offered for this is a study which showed that in the corpus examined, technical vocabulary accounted for only 9% of the total range of lexis. Does this imply that around 90% of words occurring across a range of scientific and technical disciplines will be the same? Surely not. A significant proportion of the all-important sub-technical vocabulary will not be general across disciplines but will show a marked tendency to cluster in particular fields, at least in textbooks written for first-year undergraduates. The word 'plausible' is much more likely to occur in a social science text than in a physical science text at this level. Again, a word may

have two or more sub-technical meanings which are distributed unequally across different content areas. Take the word 'liable' in its two common meanings of 'likely' and 'accountable', for example.

I have no wish to labour individual points in a review, but rather make the general point that authors of books on English Language Teaching really ought to take more care to avoid peddling their own pet ideas as if they were descriptive of a general state of affairs, without feeling the need to provide the evidence to buttress their opinions masquerading as fact. Dogmatic statements such as the following reveal only a lack of thought:

> 'The justification [for a subject-specific approach] becomes even less significant when we take into account underlying skills and strategies. These certainly do not vary with the subject-area.' (p 166)

Clearly, the authors have not stopped to consider the differences in reading strategy required of readers of, say, Hansard (distinguishing fact from opinion) and technical manuals (relating diagrams to descriptions), to take two contrasting examples.

Despite these criticisms of the book, the approach as a whole does, I think, mark a significant step forward. The authors are right in their contention that 'the starting point for all language teaching should be an understanding of how people learn.' (p 39) It is true that learning factors have been accorded little attention in ESP course design, which has tended to be based on the language (described in structural or functional terms) which is characteristic of the target situation. As Widdowson (1981) has argued, such a 'goal-oriented' approach should give way to 'process-oriented' approaches. This will only be successful, however, if due attention is paid to learning factors.

In summary, I see this book as a beginning, not as a fully-articulated 'learning-centred approach', and still less one which is 'learner-centred', but rather as a springboard towards more and better materials which take account of learning principles. Experience derived from work with these new learning-based materials can ultimately teach us much about the relation between competence and performance. The 'learner syllabus', still the great unknown, may one day become one of the factors, not just <u>identified,</u> but forming an active part in course design, and lending greater accountability to the whole enterprise.

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b) *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*
Sinclair, J.M. (Editor in chief)
Collins, 1987 pp xxiv + 1703

> This dictionary looks rather like most others if you don't look too closely. Actually it is quite new and different. The techniques used to compile it are new and use advanced computer technology. For the user the kind of information is different, and the presentation of the information is different.' (Introduction, p xv)

Cobuild, an acronym for the Collins-Birmingham University international Language Database, is a landmark in lexicography. Compiled as it is by a team of editorial staff headed by John Sinclair, a well-known and distinguished scholar, researcher and English language teacher, this new dictionary sets a standard hitherto unrivalled. Superficially, of course, the dictionary is like all others, being constituted of items in bold letters arranged alphabetically and giving information about their pronunciation, meaning and grammar. A closer look, however, reveals that *Cobuild* is in fact a new and different dictionary - new and different in its origin, new and different in the density and wealth of information it gives and in the way this information is presented and organised. Anyone who consults the dictionary will realize that items are not, as in other dictionaries, explained in a detached way, but will feel that there is a real concern for them as users. There is every attempt to help the users to derive the utmost out of the dictionary. To take a simple example - if a word is pronounced differently according to whether it is used as a noun or adjective or as a verb the users' attention is drawn to this. They are specifically told that the word 'present', for instance, "is pronounced / prɛzənt / when it is an adjective or noun, and / prɪˈzɛnt / when it is a verb." (See Fig. 1) By contrast, in dictionaries like the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (henceforth OALD) and the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (henceforth LDCE) the word 'present' is given separate entries according to the part of speech, with the different pronunciations, but there is no attempt at drawing the users' attention to the difference in pronunciation, and the unwary user, of whom there is an abundance in our part of the world, may not notice the difference.

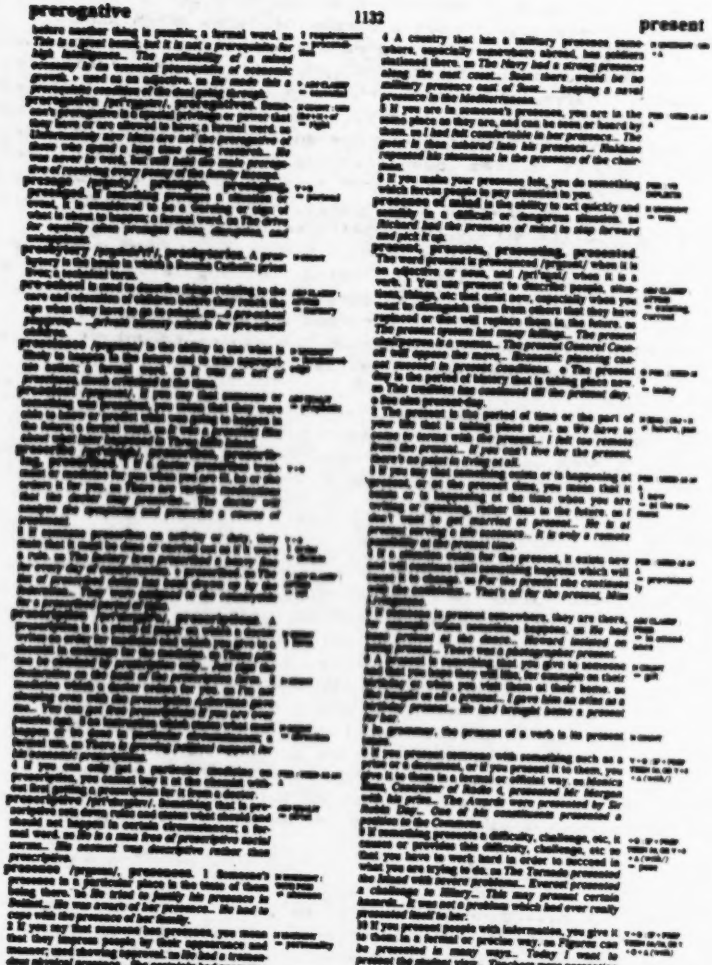

Fig 1

How the dictionary came into being

Cobuild is based on research that has gone on for seven years in Birmingham University. It uses a corpus of data, which according to the Editor in chief, gives a fair representation of contemporary English - i.e. English as it is used today. Extensive computer facilities have been used to analyse the corpus, which is varied, since it is derived from "books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets, conversations, radio and television broadcasts". One advantage of using a corpus of this sort is that no item appears in the dictionary which has not come from the corpus. Thus obsolete words have no place. Another advantage is that examples of usage are generally taken from actual texts, and not invented to illustrate the meaning or usage of a word. This gives the users a greater assurance than in the case of invented examples since they have an authority to depend on and a model to follow. Perhaps one of the biggest advantages to foreigners learning English is that they are presented with a generous number of examples of informal English which will help them overcome the embarrassment of talking like a book or of not understanding a native speaker who is looking for a bathroom.

In the pages that follow I attempt to show how this new dictionary is different from and superior to other dictionaries in both the type and presentation of the information it contains.

Examples

Examples are taken from the corpus wherever possible, and according to the Editor in chief, "only very rarely have examples been composed because of the absence of a suitable one from the corpus." The examples given provide a reliable guide for speaking and writing in contemporary English since they are backed up by authority. They support the definition and illustrate the usage. They are presented very clearly in italics within an entry as in other dictionaries like OALD and LDCE. But in *Cobuild* additional techniques are adopted to help the user: the abbreviation EG appears before the first example in the entry, or in the paragraph or sub-paragraph. If the example is not a complete sentence it is preceded by EG followed by three dots, these latter being also used to separate one example from another.

Meaning and Function of items

Cobuild explains meanings of items in an innovative and helpful way. It avoids using a style that is too condensed and adopts various techniques for explaining meanings according to whether the word is a verb or noun, whether the subject is human or not human or whether the word is used metaphorically or not. For example, an entry for a word like 'bit' will begin like this: "A bit of something..." and this suggests that 'bit' in this sense is a noun. An entry for a verb like 'assume' will begin like this: "If you assume that something is true, ...". This suggests that the verb in this sense is used with a human subject. Words used metaphorically are introduced by "If you say...", as in "If you say that you are sick to death...".

Cobuild pays special attention to the functions of words and phrases. It tells the user what a word or phrase does in the real world - whether it is used to express an apology, advice, insult, invitation or doubt. Other functions relate to the organisation of discourse. For example, the function of 'right' as a discourse boundary marker is not given either in OALD or LDCE, but it has a place in *Cobuild*, "Right, let's have you sitting at your desks.... Right, open your mouths...".

In explaining meanings or functions of items, *Cobuild* achieves a greater clarity than either OALD or LDCE. For instance, the pedagogically useful informal expression 'so-and-so' is much better explained in *Cobuild*, where the user is told precisely when to use it: "1. You use so-and-so instead of a name, title, word, etc when you are talking about a class of things... EG..." and "2. You can call someone a so-and-so or refer to them as a so-and-so when you are annoyed with them or think that they are foolish. You say so-and-so in order to avoid using a swear word. EG..." In contrast, the OALD is not so helpful. The user is told that the meaning is "person not needing to be named: ... (i.e. used to avoid using a derogatory noun)". Similarly, in LDCE, although more help is given, the explanation falls short of the clarity of *Cobuild*. True, unlike OALD, it assigns a separate entry to the expression but deals only very briefly with the meaning and no specific help is given as to when to use it (see definition 1 below). "1 (U) someone or something; a certain one (not to be named): ...", and definition 2 sounds rather exaggerated "2 (C) euph. (used instead of a stronger word like BASTARD) a rude, wicked person".

There can be little doubt that *Cobuild* is superior to other dictionaries in the way it clarifies meanings and advises on when to use items. But perhaps it can also be said that it is superior in the amount of entries it includes, especially in the area of informal English. A word like 'thingy' (see Fig 2), which appears in *Cobuild* is absent from both of the other dictionaries. One can go on giving examples to show the merits of *Cobuild* over other dictionaries but time and space do not permit that.

It may be noted that in *Cobuild* no diagrams are used, with the exception of one on 'time'. Far from being a drawback, this rather reinforces the point above - that the exceptionally clear way of explaining meanings has obviated the necessity of using diagrams. After all, diagrams are meant to help with meanings, and if words can do the job, diagrams become unnecessary.

Forms and Spellings

In this area *Cobuild* is much superior to any other dictionary I have used. Here one finds a real concern for the users, who are spared a lot of confusion and time. The information needed is right under their noses and the users do not have to turn to the explanation of a plethora of codes as in LDCE nor to the use of symbols that may lead the unwary to inaccurate results.

For example, take the various forms of the adjective 'happy'. In

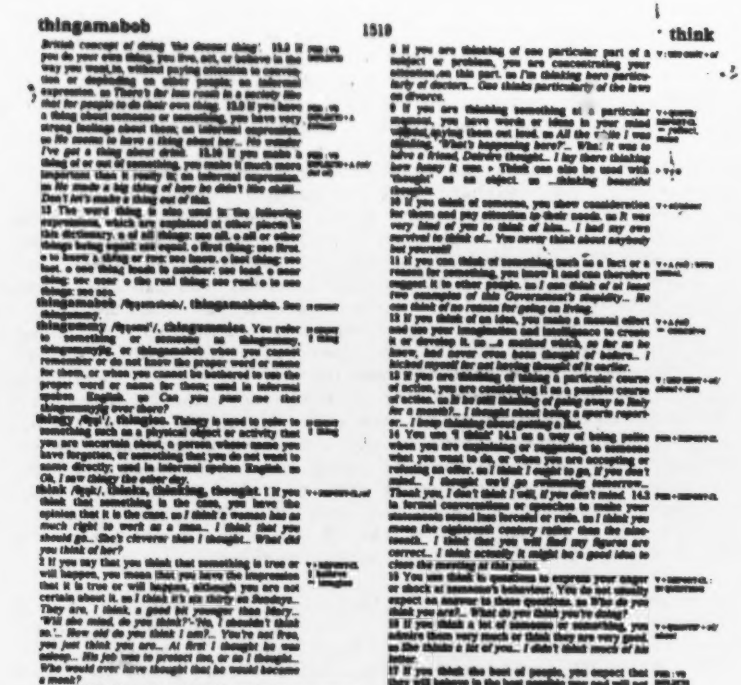

Fig 2

OALD we have 'happy'... (-ier, -iest). Here the learner will be easily misled and may retain the 'y' of 'happy', thus producing the wrong forms *happyier and *happyiest. In LDCE there are special codes for adjectives. The adjective 'happy' has the code [Wal;B]. The users will have to refer to the explanation of the symbols and they will find that 'Wal' stands for adjectives taking '-er' and '-est', like 'nice/nicer,' and 'B' stands for ordinary adjectives. This is inaccurate. Are the users supposed to add 'er' and 'est' to happy? It is true that in the introduction of LDCE p xxxi the users are told that the symbol 'Wal' stands for adjectives and adverbs that form their comparative and superlative in one of three ways, of which one covers the category of those ending in 'y' (y becomes i + er/est). This complicates matters for the users, who are greatly helped by *Cobuild* which presents the forms in full right from the start: 'happy [.....], happier, happiest'. Nothing could be simpler than this.

The same is true for nouns and verbs. *Cobuild* gives all the forms of nouns and verbs clearly at the beginning of the entry thus making it easy for the users to benefit from the information.

Grammatical and Semantic Information

This type of information is presented in an accessible way in the 'Extra Column', one of the distinctive features of *Cobuild*. Grammar notes are given in abbreviated form, thus avoiding unnecessary symbols and codes such as those in OALD and LDCE. Abbreviations are easier to remember than symbols or codes, and these are adequately explained in boxes in the correct place in the alphabetical entry list of the dictionary. For instance in the boxes are explained the abbreviations of the various adjectives: Adj Classif, Adj Colour, etc. There are also notes about the position of words, e.g. adjectives in relation to other adjectives. Many dictionaries do not give such information and the user has to look for a grammar book to find what is needed. In *Cobuild*, under the entry Adj Classif, the user is given a lot of help by being told that if adjectives of different types are used together, the order is Adj Qualit + Adj Colour + Adj Classif. No such help is given in either OALD or LDCE.

Apart from that, the grammar notes given in the Extra Column, which cover the class to which the word belongs, also indicate the range of syntactic uses, pointing out typical syntactic patterns and choices, beyond those given in the examples.

The other type of information provided in the Extra Column is semantic. By using a set of simple symbols, relationships of synonymy (=), antonymy (≠) and superordination (↑) are indicated and the user is spared the effort of having to find words related to a particular entry. For instance in the Extra Column against 'friend' the following relationships are given, according to the various senses in which the word is used: = ally, ≠ enemy and ↑ acquaintance. Such information is not provided by OALD or LDCE.

Common Words

By 'common words' is meant grammatical words, e.g. 'the, on, and' etc, as distinct from lexical words such as 'escape, iron, true' etc. In *Cobuild* special attention is given to 'common words' and more space is accorded them than in dictionaries such as OALD and LDCE. Here the concern is with patterns of usage, rather than with what they mean, and although such words have a place in other dictionaries, their usage is not explained clearly and the learners are left wondering how to use them even after they have studied the entries. In *Cobuild* these words are given in natural patterns of use which are of greater help to the users.'

Conclusion

There is no doubt that *Cobuild* is not only unrivalled in the kind of information it gives, but also in its excellent presentation. The dictionary is much easier to understand and much more useful than any other dictionary of comparable size. Occasional misprints (pp xviii, xx) are quickly forgotten and the users are impressed by the amount of help they are given. Sincere congratulations to those who produced this valuable dictionary which costs £10 only.

References

Procter, P. (1978) (Chief editor) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.* Longman.

Hornby, A.S. (1974) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English.* Oxford University Press.

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3. SHORT NOTICES

a) Items Received

Three business English texts from Macmillan:

i) *English for Business Studies* by Brendan Moore and Chris Parsons (1981)

ii) *English for the Office* by Brendan Moore (1979)

iii) *Talking Business* by M. O'Reilly, P.E. Moran & N. Ferguson (1975)

i) The first text, *English for Business Studies* is described as suitable for students of English as a second or foreign language who intend to proceed to tertiary-level courses in business studies in English-speaking countries. Roughly translated, its level seems to be about middle intermediate. In terms of syllabus coverage this text is rather sketchy. Ten notional categories are presented, but the criteria behind the selection of these particular notions or their relevance to business students are not discussed. As far as methodology goes, the word 'communicative' is mentioned in this case with some justification, for although a lot of the language practice activities seem to be taking place at sentence level, there is generally an attempt to get the student to use the answers to build up larger units of discourse. All in all, the book does contain a wealth of material: listening, reading and writing exercises making lots of use of charts, etc. Perhaps, however, its worst point is the way in which it clings tenaciously to a particular notion for page after page, which does tend to put one off it slightly as a main course book, where one would expect a wider coverage of language items.

ii) The second text, *English for the Office*, is even sketchier in terms of syllabus coverage. The word "functions" is used in the jacket notes, which might mislead the unwary, since what really controls the organisation of the book is a series of business-related topics, e.g. post-office services, travellers' cheques, invoices, etc. In fact the table of contents reads more like that of a text on business studies than an English textbook. Again no reason is given as to why these particular topics are chosen, as opposed to a whole lot of others. Business correspondence is something which receives heavy emphasis, but whilst there are lots of examples, there is very little in the way of support when the student comes to write. What really spoils this text, however, is the layout. Page after page of fairly solid print leaves one wondering where - if anywhere - one should focus one's attention.

iii) Quite a useful little text was the third on offer by Macmillan, *Talking Business*. The book is intended to give the businessman who can "already express himself in spoken English ... further practice in his professional field", and is thus aimed at students from about middle intermediate upwards. Units are made up of a dialogue, followed by multiple-choice questions, followed again by lots of good practice exercises such as dialogue completion. Situational in organisation, the text does have a decidedly functional flavour and although it is intended primarily for self-study - there is a good, clear answer key - it could provide a very useful piece of supplementary classroom material, particularly if the teacher were prepared to carry the exercises a step further and use them as a stimulus to role-play.

b) Conferences and Conventions

i) The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) holds its Conference at Meiji University, Tokyo, from 21-23 November 1987.

For information, write to:

JALT
c/o Kyoto English Centre
Sumitomo Seimei Building, 8F
Shijo Karasuma Nishi-iru
Shimogyo-ku
Kyoto 600
Japan

ii) The second International Symposium on ELT Methodology will take place in Jena in the German Democratic Republic from 2-4 December 1987. The theme of the symposium is: "The Development of Writing Skills in ELT, Past and Present".

For information, write to:

Prof. W.H. Strauss,
Leiter des Forschungsseminars Englishmethodik,
Friedrich-Schiller Universitaat,
DDR - 6900 Jena,
East Germany.

iii) The 22nd TESOL Convention will be held from 8-13 March 1988 in Chicago, Illinois, USA. The convention is interested in presentations dealing with classroom practices, research in language learning and teaching, or the connection between the two.

For information, write to:

TESOL Central Office,
1118 22nd Street, N.W. (Suite 205),
Georgetown University,
Washington D.C. 20037
USA

iv) The 22nd IATEFL Conference will be held from 11-14 April 1988 in Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

For information, write to:

IATEFL,
3 Kingsdown Chambers,
Kingsdown Park,
Tankerton, Whitstable,
Kent CT5 2DJ
UK

v) The 2nd Eindhoven LSP Conference will be held from 2-6 August 1988 in Eindhoven, Holland. The theme of the conference is: "LSP: Technical and Business Communication: Research and Application".

For information, write to:

Dr Jan Ulijn
Dept of Applied Linguistics
Eindhoven University of Technology
PO Box 513
5600 MB Eindhoven
Netherlands

vi) We have received advance notice of the 7th European Symposium on LSP, to take place in Budapest, in the first half of August 1989. The theme of the Symposium is to be: "Comprehension and Communication".

For information, write to:

Andras Szöllösy
Technical University of Budapest
Erdokarilo
ut 15. VII - 21
Budapest 1157
Hungary

vii) We have received advance notice of the 8th ALLA Conference in Jyväskylä, Finland, in August 1990.

For information, write to:

Kari Savajaara
English Dept
University of Jyväskylä
Finland

viii) We have received advance notice of Forum 90, the 4th Conference of the International Council for Technical Communication, to be held in Sweden in August 1990.

For information, write to:

L Andersson
COMED A-B
Harpsundvägen 157
S - 124 40 Bandagen
Sweden